

# Preparing Your Vegetables

Remove bruised, wilted, yellowish, or tough sections of the vegetable.

Trim sparingly to avoid excessive loss of food and nutrients.

Whenever possible, **don't peel your veggies** -- the skins contain lots of valuable nutrients;

Wash vegetables thoroughly before cooking.

- Use plenty of water for greens; lift them from the water to let sand and grit settle.
- Soak fresh Brussel sprouts and broccoli in cold water for a short time to remove insects.
- To clean root vegetables, simply scrub with a brush under cold running water.
- Most of your veggies are best cleaned in a bowl full of cold water and an edible acid, such as lemon juice or apple cider vinegar, for 10 minutes -- this will ensure **thorough cleansing**. 1/4 cup of this edible acid is usually enough for a large bowl of water

**Most veggies can be washed immediately** upon returning from the grocery, then placed into air-tight bags or Tupperware-like containers. When you're ready to eat, they'll be ready to go

## Roasting Fresh vegetables

Roasting gives vegetables a richer, sweeter flavor.

Combine a variety of seasonal vegetables i.e., corn, onions, peppers, Brussels sprouts, tomatoes, garlic, eggplant, zucchini and summer squash. You can also add root vegetables like potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, turnips and rutabagas.

When making a dish with more than one veggie, be sure to **cut them all about the same size** to help even out the cook time

Directions for Roasting Vegetables:

1. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees
2. Cut your vegetables into fairly large pieces, cubes or chunks or thick slices
3. Toss the vegetables with a little oil
4. Spread the vegetables out on a baking sheet (covered with aluminum foil for easier clean-up) and put them in the oven
5. About halfway through the cooking time, shake the pan to redistribute the food or turn each piece over. *This is a good time to add seasoning or herbs, which may burn if added at the beginning of the cooking time.*
6. They're done when they are browned and tender

Roasting times vary, depending on the vegetables. Just keep checking and use your common sense. Firmer vegetables need longer to cook, while thinner vegetables like green beans and asparagus will require only 15 minutes or so.

If you're roasting a lot of vegetables together, which is a very simple and good side dish for any meal, you may have to add them at different times to get them all to come out done together.

## Grilling Fresh Vegetables

Almost any vegetable can be grilled! Experiment to discover your favorites

Always grill vegetables over medium heat. Vegetables contain water and sugar. If the heat is too high, the veggies will burn quickly. If your grill isn't hot enough, the vegetables will become soggy and their nutrients will cook away.

Make sure you oil the grill with corn or canola oil. The sugars in vegetables will caramelize and stick if the grill isn't oiled.

Certain veggies, such as asparagus, carrots, potatoes and whole onions, can also be brushed with oil before grilling. This makes the veggies get crispy and creates those really cool grill marks. Using olive oil for the vegetables adds more flavor.

Never over-cook fresh vegetables. They should a tender-crisp consistency, meaning they still have some of the original crunch.

Season the veggies. You can simply use salt and pepper or go with spice mixtures, rubs or marinades. Seasonings that contain butter or sugar tend to burn more quickly so be careful when using them.

# Steaming Fresh Vegetables

The standard boiling method often overcooks vegetables; they become limp and sometimes lose their bright green color.

Steamed vegetables cooked until they are “crisp-tender” instead of “limp” have the best flavor and texture with more intact fiber and nutrients.

## Steaming vegetables on top of the stove

- Put enough water in a saucepan so that it does not touch the bottom of the steamer basket; approximately 1/2 to 1 inch of water.
- Bring water to a boil.
- Place vegetables in a steamer basket: whole vegetables should be in a single layer, and cut up vegetables should be layered no more than 2 inches deep.
- Place steamer in pan; cover the pan tightly. Reduce heat so the water continues to boil.
- Add more water during cooking, if necessary.
- Cooking and steaming timings may vary, depending on the particular vegetable.

## Steaming in the Microwave

- Use a microwave-safe baking dish or casserole
- Follow the microwave directions given in the vegetable steaming chart
  - <http://www.bhg.com/recipes/how-to/cooking-basics/vegetable-cooking-times-temperatures/>

The amounts given on the chart yield enough cooked vegetables for four servings, except where noted.