

# Cooking Vegetables Guide

Learn the best & healthiest ways to cook veggies  
with step-by-step instructions



hometree  
life



# Cooking Vegetables

## The basics

Vegetables are loaded with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that protect you from chronic illness. And while most health experts recommend eating at least 5 veggies a day, only 1 in 10 Americans reach that goal.

Trying up up your veggie intake? This guide will help! It breaks down the best methods for cooking veggies, along with helpful tips, tricks and recipes to help you turn up the veggies. But before we get into the nitty gritty on cooking methods, let's cover some basics.

### Choosing cooking oils

Not all oils are created equal. Oils like canola, corn, soybean, sunflower, and safflower oil produce free radicals when heated. So steer clear of them.

But even healthy oils can become unstable when exposed to high heat. Each oil has a different smoke point, or temperature where the oil breaks down.

Here are some of the healthiest oils to cook veggies with, along with their smoke points:

Oil	Smoke point
extra virgin olive oil	350 ° F
coconut oil (unrefined)	350 ° F
avocado oil (unrefined)	375 ° F
ghee	450 ° F
coconut oil (refined)	450 ° F
avocado oil (refined)	520 ° F

### Grouping veggies

Different vegetables have different cook times. So if you're cooking a few at once, you can group veggies with similar cook times.

You can also sequence veggies by cook time, adding harder veggies first and softer veggies last. The chart below should help:

### Takes the longest



- Root veggies: sweet potatoes, turnips, carrots, parsnips
- Cruciferous veggies: broccoli, cauliflower, Brussel sprouts
- Tender veggies: zucchini, cherry tomatoes
- Greens: collard greens, kale, spinach

### Cooks the fastest

# Steaming



## Steaming 101

Steaming is not only one of the quickest ways to cook vegetables, it's one of the healthiest. Steaming helps veggies retain their color, flavor, and nutrients. Just don't overdo it (no one likes mushy vegetables 😊). Lightly steamed is best -- for texture and nutrients.

## How to do it:

1. Cut veggies into uniform, bite-sized pieces.
2. Add an inch of water to a pot and bring to a boil over high heat.
3. Place a steamer basket in the pot and add veggies. Reduce heat to medium-low.
4. Cover with a lid and cook until vegetables are tender when poked with a fork.

## Steaming cook times

- Asparagus & green beans: 3-5 min
- Cauliflower & broccoli: 8-10 min
- Potatoes, carrots, beets, turnips, & other root veggies (chopped into 1 inch cubes): 10-15 min
- Spinach: 3 min
- Zucchini: 5 min
- Brussels sprouts (halved): 6-8 min

## Tips for adding flavor

- Salt & pepper: Sprinkle atop veggies before steaming
- Fresh herbs: Place sprigs on top of veggies in steamer basket
- Oils: Toss veggies with olive oil or sesame oil before steaming
- Lemon: Add a slice or two to veggies while cooking
- Vinegar: Toss veggies with a splash of balsamic vinegar

# Roasting



## Roasting 101

Roasting intensifies the flavor of vegetables and brings out their natural sweetness. Toss in some fresh herbs and spices to up the flavor even more (and get a boost of antioxidants). With roasting, you can also do double duty by cooking a tray of veggies with a protein dish at the same time. ([Tray meals](#) work great for this).

## How to do it

1. Heat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Slice or chop veggies into even-sized pieces.
3. Place on a sheet pan lined with parchment paper.
4. Lightly coat veggies with avocado oil or coconut oil.
5. Add salt, pepper, & any herbs or spices.
6. Roast until desired tenderness.

## Roasting cook times

- Zucchini & bell peppers: 10-15 min
- Asparagus & green beans: 10-15 min
- Tomatoes (cherry or sliced): 15-20 min
- Broccoli & brussel sprouts: 20-25 min
- Cauliflower: 35-40 min
- Root veggies (carrots, beets, parsnips, & sweet potatoes): 25-35 min
- White potatoes: 35-45 min

## Roasted veggie recipes

- [Roasted broccoli](#)
- [Perfect roasted asparagus](#)
- [Roasted Brussels sprouts with balsamic and garlic](#)
- [Easy roasted carrots](#)
- [Roasted curry cauliflower](#)
- [Roasted fingerling potatoes with rosemary and garlic](#)
- [Maple roasted butternut squash with Brussels sprouts & bacon](#)

# Sauteing



## Sauteing 101

Sauteing is a quick and easy way to cook flavorful veggies. Unlike steaming, sauteing requires a bit of oil which adds a pop of flavor. The end result is tender crisp veggies with a slightly caramelized surface. Toss in some sea salt, herbs and spices to add an extra punch of flavor.

## How to do it

1. Chop veggies into bite-sized pieces.
2. Heat 1 tbsp avocado oil or coconut oil over medium high heat in skillet.
3. Add veggies and any herbs and spices, stirring occasionally.
4. If veggies stick, add a splash of water to deglaze pan.
5. Cook until fork tender.

## Sauteing cook times

- Soft veggies (snow peas, zucchini, & squash): 3-5 min
- Medium veggies (onions & celery): 6-8 min
- Hard veggies (sweet potatoes, carrots, etc): 10-15 min

## Sauteed vegetable recipes

- [Simple sauted veggies](#)
- [Garlicky sauted mushrooms and asparagus](#)
- [Sauteed zucchini recipe](#)
- [Quick sauteed peppers and onions](#)
- [Sauteed green beans](#)
- [Paleo stir-fry veggies recipe](#)

# Grilling



## Grilling 101

Like roasting, grilling brings out the natural sweetness of veggies, while adding a smoky flavor. And while meats can form carcinogens in the grilling process, veggies do NOT. So you can grill away worry-free. You can wrap smaller veggies in foil packets or place larger veggies directly on the grill. Veggie skewers are also a fun option!

## How to do it

1. Slice veggies to a similar thickness. (1/3 -1/2 inch or so)
2. Drizzle veggies with avocado oil or coconut oil & spread evenly.
3. Sprinkle sea salt, pepper, and any dried herbs or spices.
4. Place on grill over medium heat and flip after 3-5 min.
5. Cook until desired tenderness.

## Grilling cook times

- Bell peppers & onions (quartered): 8-10 min
- Yellow squash, zucchini, & eggplant (cut lengthwise) : 7-8 min
- Mushrooms: 7-8 min
- Asparagus & green onions: 4-6 min
- Corn on the cob: 15-20 min

Note: These are total cook times, so flip halfway through

## Grilled vegetable recipes

- [Grilled corn](#)
- [Grilled asparagus](#)
- [Easy grilled veggie skewers](#)
- [Grilled vegetables in foil packets](#)
- [Grilled eggplant with garlic & herbs](#)
- [Grilled zucchini & squash](#)
- [Mixed grilled vegetables](#)



# Cooking Vegetables

## Other options

The four cooking methods we've covered so far are the healthiest ways to cook veggies. That said, the more veggies you eat, the better! So while the methods below aren't ideal, you can still use them when you're in a pinch.



### Boiling

Boiling is one of the simplest and fastest ways to cook veggies. It works especially well with dense, thick-skinned veggies like potatoes and beets. The trouble is, many nutrients can leach into the cooking water. You can remedy this by consuming the cooking water in soups and stews.

### How to do it

1. Bring pot of water to boil over high heat.
2. Season water generously with salt.
3. When water comes to boil, add vegetables.
4. Boil until softened.
5. Drain, rinse with cold water & dry well.

### Microwave steaming

Like boiling, microwaving veggies can destroy some nutrients. Especially vitamin C, which is heat sensitive. But if you're in time crunch, microwaving can be a quick and convenient way to get more veggies on your plate. Just try not to rely on it too much.

### How to do it

1. Place veggies in micro-wave safe container with a small amount of water.
2. Stir or rotate during cooking to prevent drying or hot spots.
3. Cook until desired tenderness.

Note: Soft veggies may take only 3-4 min, while firmer ones may take 6-8 min.