



Quick, Healthy Ways to Cook

Here are some tips for quick and nutritious food preparation. These techniques will save you time and help to cut down on fat.

Stir-Frying

If you don't have a wok, use a cast-iron or non-stick skillet. Most dishes can be cooked with just a tablespoon of oil if you heat the pan first. Buy pre-cut vegetables to cut down on preparation time. Try stir-frying sliced lean beef and ready-cut broccoli with a dash of soy sauce and a few slices of fresh ginger root.



Microwaving

Because microwaves cook so quickly, most of the nutrients in the foods you're cooking don't have time to escape. Read the cooking directions carefully; it's easy to overcook foods. Use the microwave to "bake" potatoes or winter squash and to reheat leftovers or soup. Fish filets can be microwaved in minutes—add seasoning and a dash of milk, cover with wax paper, and cook.

Crock Pots

This handy kitchen appliance cooks food slowly at low temperatures. Set it up in the morning and dinner will be ready and waiting for you when you get home. Soups, stews, and pot roasts all make great crock pot meals. (Be sure to trim fat before cooking.) Extra-lean, less marbled cuts of meat become tender and juicy when cooked in a crock pot. Create a variety of flavors by adding different types of canned tomatoes, herbs, and spices.

Baking, Broiling, and Grilling

Bake, broil, or grill foods on a rack to drain fats away during cooking. Not only is this a healthier way to eat, but it's delicious as well. Grill vegetables as well as meat—add bell peppers, tomatoes, onions, and mushrooms to kebobs and foil-wrapped packets.

Steaming

Steaming can be done either in a microwave or on the stove top. Either way, it keeps in nutrients and flavor, without adding fat. Ready-cut vegetable florettes and baby carrots can go straight from the bag to the steamer.

Pressure Cooking

By using steam, pressure cookers can cook a pound of potatoes in just 4 minutes or a chicken stew in less than half an hour. A pressure cooker can also turn the toughest cut of meat into a tender main course. Don't overseason foods—pressure cooking uses very little liquid, so flavors are more concentrated.

Poaching

In poaching, the food is covered with liquid (such as broth, milk, or wine) and gently simmered until done. Poaching uses less liquid than steaming or boiling, so delicate flavors are less diluted. Poaching works well for fish or eggs.