

# LOW FAT COOKING FOR MEAT, POULTRY AND FISH

## General Low Fat Cooking Tips

1. Cook with lean cuts of meat. (Marbled fat is the primary source of saturated fat for many people.)
2. When recipes call for bacon, use lean ham or Canadian bacon.
3. Trim any visible fat on meat or poultry before cooking.
4. Remove skin from poultry before or after cooking.
5. Most of the time, instead of frying foods, broil, grill, roast, braise or stew them.
6. Coat cooking pans with a thin layer of oil, then wipe with a paper towel.
7. Oven-fry fish or chicken. Dip the meat first in egg whites, then coat with seasoned bread crumbs. Bake on a nonstick pan that has been coated with vegetable oil spray.
8. Drain pan-fried foods on a paper towel to absorb extra grease.
9. Remove fat from meat and poultry juices and from soups and stews. You can use a fat separator pitcher while they are hot. Or, if you refrigerate the liquid, the fat will harden and is then easier to remove with a spoon. Reheat before serving.

## Dry Heat Cooking Methods

### Grilling

1. Put the meat on the grill. For quick-cooking meat, fish and poultry items such as chops, fillets, steaks, burgers, breasts or kebobs, place on the grill directly over the coals. Roasts, thick steaks or chops, whole chicken or whole turkey require longer cooking at lower temperatures. Put a drip pan under the meat, with coals on each side of the pan. Cover the grill and open the grill vents.
2. Grill until the meat is cooked. (Check the temperature with a thermometer.)

### Roasting

1. Place the roast or poultry on a rack in a shallow roasting pan.
2. Season meat before or after cooking. Do not add water and do not cover.
3. Insert thermometer into the thickest part of the roast, not touching fat or bone.
4. Roast to 5 to 10 degrees below desired doneness. (Check the temperature with a thermometer.)
5. Allow roast to stand 15 to 20 minutes before serving. The temperature of the roast will continue to rise during this time. It will also be easier to carve.



### Broiling

1. Set oven for broiling. (Preheating is not necessary.)
2. Place meat, fish or poultry on a rack in a broiler pan.
3. Adjust the oven rack. Thinner cuts (3/4 to 1 inch thick) should be 2 to 3 inches from the heat. Thicker cuts should be 3 to 6 inches from the heat.
1. Broil for half of the recommended time.
2. Season if desired, and turn the meat over.
3. Continue cooking to desired doneness. (Check the temperature with a thermometer.)
4. Season the second side if desired, and serve.

### Panbroiling

1. Place meat, fish or poultry in a preheated heavy nonstick skillet. Do not add oil or water, and do not cover.
2. For cuts thicker than 1/2 inch, use medium or medium-low heat and turn over occasionally. Cook thinner cuts over medium-high heat, turning once. Do not overcook. (Check the temperature with a thermometer.)
3. Remove fat as it accumulates.
4. Season if desired, and serve.

### Stir-Frying

1. Cut meat (beef, pork or poultry) into thin uniform slices, strips or pieces.
2. If desired, marinate in the refrigerator to add flavor while preparing the other ingredients.
3. Heat a non-stick pan or wok with a tablespoon or less of oil, or use vegetable oil spray.
4. Stir-fry half the meat over medium-high temperature. Stir-fry the remaining meat, and then stir-fry the vegetables. It is not possible to use a thermometer, so be sure to cook the meat long enough.
5. Continuously turn meat or poultry pieces with a scooping motion.
6. Combine meat or poultry with the vegetables and serve.



### Browning ground beef

1. Put the ground beef into a preheated skillet. You can add onion and garlic for additional flavor. Stir until the ground beef is well cooked. It is not possible to use a thermometer, so be sure to cook the meat long enough.
2. Transfer the meat with a slotted spoon to a plate lined with white non-recycled paper towels.
3. Transfer the meat to a colander.
4. Rinse with 4 cups of hot (but not boiling) water. Do not use water directly from the tap. (The pressure from the faucet can change the texture of the meat.)
5. Add dry seasonings after the rinsing process has been completed.

## **Moist Heat Cooking Methods**

### Braising

1. In a heavy pan, slowly brown meat or poultry on all sides, using vegetable oil spray or a small amount of oil, if necessary.
2. Pour off drippings and season with herbs or spices, as desired.
3. Add a small amount of liquid such as water, juice, wine, broth or stock. 1/4 to 1/2 cup is recommended.
4. Cover tightly to provide a moist atmosphere for cooking.
5. Simmer over low heat on top of the stove or in the oven (300-325° F).
6. Vegetables should be added toward the end of cooking to prevent overcooking.
7. Cook until the meat is tender. (Check the temperature with a thermometer.)
8. The cooking liquid may be reduced or thickened to make a sauce after removing any fat.

### Stewing

1. Coat meat or poultry lightly with seasoned flour, if desired.
2. In a heavy pan, slowly brown on all sides using vegetable oil spray or a small amount of oil, if necessary.
3. Pour off the drippings.
4. Cover the meat or poultry with liquid, such as water, juice, wine, broth or stock. Season as desired.
5. Cover tightly and simmer. Vegetables should be added toward the end of cooking time to prevent overcooking.
6. Cook until the meat is tender. (Check the temperature with a thermometer.)
7. The cooking liquid may be reduced or thickened to make a sauce after removing any fat.

### Poaching

1. Season the meat, fish or poultry as desired.
2. For roasts, tie with heavy string at 2-inch intervals, if needed. Brown on all sides in a nonstick pan.
3. Cover the meat, fish or poultry with liquid (such as water, juice, wine, broth or stock). Season with additional ingredients, if desired.
4. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until done.

### Steaming fish on the stove

1. Place fish on a steamer pan or perforated tray.
2. Set the tray into another pan above simmering liquid.
3. Cover the pan and continue simmering over low heat until the fish flakes.

### Steaming fish in the microwave

1. Place fish in a microwave-safe dish. If you have several fish or fillets, arrange them like the spokes of a wheel to ensure even cooking.
2. Add a small amount of liquid and seasoned vegetables, if desired.
3. Cover with microwave-safe plastic wrap, venting one corner.
4. Following the manufacturer's directions, microwave on high until the fish flakes. If your microwave does not have a revolving plate, rotate or turn the plate once or twice so the fish cooks evenly.



General cooking tips adapted from *The Complete Food & Nutrition Guide* (American Dietetic Association).

Meat cooking information from *Lean 'N Easy: Preparing Meat with Less Fat and More Taste* (National Cattleman's Beef Association).