

COOKING TERMS A-Z GLOSSARY

Al dente - Food that is cooked until it is 'firm to the bite'. This is most commonly used to describe how pasta should be cooked.

Au gratin - Recipes that are browned in the oven, or under a grill. Often refers to dishes that use a sauce and are topped with breadcrumbs and/or cheese.

Baste - To spoon juices over food that is being roasted or baked to prevent it from drying out and to glaze the surface – commonly meat, or baked fruit.

Bind - To add eggs, cream or liquid to a recipe to make the other ingredients hold together

Blanch - To plunge food (usually vegetables) into boiling water briefly. The food is then removed and placed into cold water to stop the cooking process. This is often to help loosen their skins or to par-cook prior to freezing.

Braise - To cook slowly in a very small amount of liquid in a dish with a tightly sealed lid.

Compote - A chilled dish of fresh or dried fruit that has been slowly cooked in sugar syrup (which may contain liquor and liqueur and sometimes spices). Slow cooking is important for the fruit to retain its shape.

Coulis - A strained sauce made from purée fruit or vegetables.

Crumbed/Breading - (also known as crumbing) is a dry grain-derived coating for a piece of food such as meat, vegetable, poultry, fish, shellfish, etc., made from breadcrumbs or a breading mixture with seasonings.

Cure; Curing - to treat food (such as meat, fish or cheese) by one of several methods in order to preserve it. **Smoke-curing** is generally done in one or two ways. The **cold smoking method** (which can take up to a month, depending on the food) smokes the food at between 70o – 90oF. **Hot smoking** partially or totally cooks the food by treating it at temperatures ranging from 100o – 190oF. **Pickled foods** are smoked in variously flavored acid-base brines. **Corned products** (such as corned beef) have also been soaked in brine – usually one made with water, salt and various seasonings. **Salt-cured** foods have been dried and packed in salt preparations. **Cheese-curing** can be done by several methods, including injecting or spraying the cheese with specific bacteria or by wrapping the cheese in various flavored materials. Some more **common cured foods** are smoked ham, pickled herring and salted fish.

Deglaze - To add wine, stock or other liquid to the sediment and cooking juices left in a pan after roasting or sautéing. This is then heated to make a jus.

Freezing - Make sure that anything you put into the freezer is tightly sealed as it's easy for air to get in and cause freezer burn on your food.

Glaze - To coat foods, particularly meat or cakes, with syrup, jam, egg, milk or meat juice to give it a glazed surface when cooked.

Grill - to prepare food on a grill over hot coals or other heat source. The term barbeque is often used synonymously with grill.

Infuse - To extract flavour from one food into another, often by heating or steeping.

Julienne - To cut vegetables into long thin matchsticks.

Jus - The French word for "juice," which can refer to both fruit and vegetable juices, as well as the natural juices exuded from meat.

Lukewarm - A temperature that feels neither hot nor cold when tested on the inside wrist – around 35°C

Marinate - To leave meat, poultry, fish, or sometimes fruit to soak in a 'marinade'. Most often a combination of liquid ingredients and other flavourings. Used to tenderise and add flavour.

Pan fry - Cook quickly in heated pan using a small amount of oil or butter as stated.

Parboil - To partly cook in boiling water. In the case of vegetables, they should still be very firm, but not crunchy.

Poach - To cook very gently in simmering water or other liquid eg: wine.

Pureé - To mash, sieve or blend well-cooked vegetables or fruit to create a thick smooth paste.

Reduce - To boil rapidly in order to evaporate liquid, concentrate the flavours, and thicken.

Refresh - To plunge cooked vegetables into cold, or iced water to arrest the cooking process after they are removed from boiling water.

Roulade - Refers to something that has been filled or stuffed and rolled. In particular meats, pastries and sponge cakes.

Roux - A method of thickening a sauce by cooking flour and butter together, then gradually stirring in the liquid ingredients.

Sauté - To fry food quickly in a hot pan, stirring or shaking the pan.

Scald - To heat liquids, (usually milk) until they are just at the point of boiling.

Score - To cut the surface of meat, pastry, or fruit with a sharp knife, without cutting right through it.

Sear - To brown (usually meat) in a hot pan or on a grill.

Simmer - To cook in liquid that is heated to the point where little bubbles rise to the surface.

Skim - To remove fat or scum from the surface of a boiling liquid.

Steam - To cook in the steam created by boiling water – usually in a lidded container that allows the steam in through vents in the base.

Steep - To stand food in hot liquid in order to extract the flavour.

Stir-fry - Method of cooking – traditionally in a wok, but also in a pan, where small pieces of food are cooked at a high temperature while turning and tossing constantly until just cooked.

Stock - Used as the base of soups, stews and in risottos – can be home made or packaged. Beef, chicken, vegetable and fish stocks are the most common.

Sweat - To cook vegetables, particularly onion, until the juices just run and the vegetable softens without colouring.

Whip - To beat with an egg-beater or electric beater until thick and frothy.

Whisk - To beat with a wire whisk until thick or frothy.

Zest - The outer rind of citrus fruit containing essential oils.