

Home Basics © Basic Terminology Sheet

- **Al Dente**
An Italian term meaning “to the tooth.” Pasta is cooked tender, but still firm.
- **Bake**
Cooking in an oven.
- **Baste**
The process of spooning or pouring pan juices over food while it cooks. This promotes moistness and a browned surface.
- **Beat**
Making a mixture smooth by whipping or stirring with a spoon, fork, wire whisk, or beater.
- **Blanch**
Refers to partially cooking an ingredient, usually vegetables, by placing them in boiling water for a few minutes.
- **Blend**
Combining ingredients until smooth and uniform in texture, flavor, and color.
- **Boil**
Heating liquid, which causes a constant production of bubbles that rise and break the surface.
- **Braise**
Cooking food slowly in a small amount of liquid in a tightly covered pan.
- **Broil**
Cooking food using an overhead source of heat.

- **Caramelize**
The process of causing sugar or the natural sugars in food to darken to a golden brown and develop a rich flavor by cooking on a constant heat.
- **Chop**
Cutting foods with a knife into smaller pieces.
- **Cream**
Beating butter or shortening, either alone or with sugar, until it is light and fluffy.
- **Cut In**
Working a solid fat such as butter or shortening into dry ingredients.

- **Dash**
1/16 teaspoon measure. (Use 1/2 of a 1/8 teaspoon measure.)
- **Deglaze**
Adding stock, wine or water to the pan after meat has been cooked and removed. When the liquid is added, it loosens the flavor from the pan to make a sauce for the meat.
- **Dice**
To cut up in uniform pieces. Usually in 1/8 to 1/4 inch squares.
- **Dissolve**
Stirring a solid food into a liquid to form a mixture in which the solid food does not remain.

- **Dredge**
Coating food with flour, corn meal or sugar before or after cooking.
- **Emulsion**
Suspension of two liquid ingredients that do not dissolve into each other.
- **Fold**
A method of gently mixing ingredients. Use a rubber spatula to cut down through the mixture, move across the bottom of the bowl, and come back up, folding some of the mixture from the bottom close to the surface.
- **Fry**
Fast browning and cooking food in varying amounts of fat, most often at a high heat.
- **Garnish**
Adding extra appeal to a finished dish.
- **Grate**
Using a grater to rub food, such as vegetables, cheeses and spices, across surface to make fine pieces.
- **Juice**
Extracted liquid that comes from fruits, vegetables or meats.
- **Julienne**
Cutting food into thin sticks about two inches long.
- **Marinade**
A process of flavoring food by soaking in a liquid or dry mixture.
- **Mash**
Removing all lumps from food with either a fork or electric beater.
- **Melt**
To heat a solid food until it becomes liquid or semi-liquid.
- **Mix**
Beating or stirring foods together until they are incorporated.
- **Pit**
Taking the seed out of a piece of fruit or vegetable.

- **Poach**
Cooking food by placing in simmering liquid.
- **Proof**
Allowing a yeast dough to rise before baking.
- **Pre-heat**
Heating the oven to the temperature needed before using it.
- **Puree**
Blending a food into a liquid or heavy paste.
- **Reconstitute**
Bringing condensed or concentrated food to its original strength by adding water.
- **Reduce**
Briskly boil liquids, so that the liquid evaporates to thicken the sauce making it rich and flavorful.

- **Roast**
Cooking an uncovered piece of meat, poultry, or vegetables in an oven.
- **Sauté**
Cooking on a stove in a small amount of oil or butter until tender.
- **Score**
To cut slits through the outer surface of food before cooking to tenderize or to make a decorative pattern.
- **Sear**
Quickly browning meat on all sides with high heat to seal in the juices.
- **Shred**
Making long narrow strips of food with a food processor or a grater.

- **Sift**
Putting dry ingredients such as flour or sugar through a sifter or mesh screen to loosen particles and incorporate air.
- **Simmer**
A method of cooking food in liquid that is kept just below the boiling point.
- **Skim**
Removing any fat or foam from the surface of liquid.
- **Steam**
A method of cooking food in the vapor given off by boiling water.
- **Steep**
Letting a food, such as tea, stand in water that is just below boiling to extract flavor and color.
- **Stir**
Incorporating ingredients with a spoon to prevent them from sticking during cooking or to cool them after cooking.
- **Toast**
Heating nuts, seeds, coconut or bread in the oven until they are slightly browned. This will bring out their natural flavor.
- **Whip**
Beating food rapidly by using a whisk or electric beater to incorporate air into the mixture.