

# COOKING TERMS

**Al dente:** To cook pasta until it is tender but firm. This helps the pasta hold its shape when placed in pasta sauce.

**Bake:** To cook food in the oven. Foods that are often baked include bread, muffins, biscuits, cookies or cake.

**Beat:** To mix ingredients very well with an electric mixer, a whisk or a fork. This also adds air into the mixture, which makes it light and fluffy.

**Blanch:** To cook a food in boiling water for a short amount of time. As soon as the vegetable or fruit comes out of the boiling water, it should be put in cold water to stop the cooking process. Blanching is usually done to vegetables and fruit before you freeze them to help keep the flavour, colour, and texture intact while frozen.

**Blend:** To mix two or more ingredients together, until they are combined into one mixture. This is done by hand, with a blender, or by using an electric mixer.

**Boil:** To heat a liquid (usually water) until many bubbles appear on the surface. This is usually done in a pot on the stove, but water can also be boiled in a kettle.

**Brown:** To cook quickly over high heat, causing the outside of the food to turn brown while the inside stays moist. This gives food an appetizing colour and a rich flavour.

**Brush:** To apply a layer of something to a food, such as a marinade, sauce, melted butter or oil.

**Chop:** To cut a food into small pieces that don't need to be the same size.

**Cream:** To blend ingredients together to make a smooth, lightweight paste. This is often done with sugar and butter when starting to make a cake or cookie recipe. Electric beaters work very well to do this.

**Deglaze:** To add liquid to a hot pan after you've already cooked something in it, which allows the caramelized bits of food stuck to the bottom to release and add flavour to the liquid.

**Dice:** To cut food (e.g., onion) into small cubes with a knife.

**Fold:** To mix ingredients together very gently. This is often done when an ingredient was whipped, so that it doesn't lose the fluffiness from the air whipped into it.

**Grate:** To reduce a large piece of food (e.g., cheese) into tiny shreds by rubbing it against a rough metal surface called a grater. Another word for grate is shred.

**Grease:** To put a small amount of oil or fat such as butter on the inside or on the surface of a dish, to prevent food from sticking to it during cooking.

**Juice:** To squeeze the liquid out of a fruit or vegetable (e.g., citrus fruit). To juice, cut lemons and limes into halves or wedges, then squeeze out the juice over a bowl.

**Knead:** To press, fold and turn dough. To knead, fold the dough over toward you, press it with the heels of both hands, give it a quarter turn, and repeat.

**Mince:** To cut up food (e.g., garlic) into very, very small pieces.

**Mix:** To combine two or more ingredients together.

**Packed:** Pressed into a measuring cup. This is often used to describe how to measure brown sugar so that the sugar is squished to the bottom, allowing more to fit in the measuring cup.

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**Peel:** To remove the skin from a fruit or vegetable (e.g., potato).

**Preheat:** To heat cooking equipment before starting to cook, such as the oven or a frying pan. Preheating makes sure that the food starts cooking right away and that it cooks properly, at the right temperature. This is especially important when baking.

**Puree:** To grind or mash food until it's completely smooth. This is most often done in a food processor or a blender.

**Roast:** To cook food in an uncovered pan or dish in the oven. This way of cooking browns the outside of food and adds flavour.

**Sauté:** To cook food quickly in a small amount of fat in a pan over medium-high temperatures. Foods that are often sautéed include onion, garlic and other vegetables such as bell peppers, broccoli and mushrooms.

**Scramble:** To cook eggs that have been whisked in a frying pan. While they are cooking, the eggs are stirred until they form several small pieces of cooked egg.

**Season:** To flavour foods with herbs, spices, condiments, salt or pepper to improve their taste.

**Sift:** To pour a dry ingredient (like flour or sugar) through a sieve or sifter to remove lumps and add air.

**Simmer:** To cook food in a heated liquid so that it bubbles gently. This is usually done by heating something over medium-high heat, then turning the heat down to low once it starts to bubble.

**Skin:** To take the skin off a food before or after cooking. Foods that are often skinned include poultry and fish.

**Slice:** To cut away a thin piece of food with a knife from the larger part, for example, to slice bread or to slice an apple.

**Steam:** To cook a food using the heat from steam. The food to be steamed is often put in a basket or rack above boiling water in a covered pan.

**Stir:** To move a spoon, spatula or other utensil in a circular motion, to mix together ingredients or a liquid.

**Toss:** To gently mix the ingredients of a salad.