

Tips At Tech: Healthy Cooking Habits

- Cut the salt in half in your favorite recipes. Try replacing it with vinegar, herbs and spices, citrus juice or citrus zest.
- Use vegetable spray or non-stick pans for stir-frying.
- Avoid cooking at high temperatures for long periods of time as this decreases the nutrient value of the food.
- Don't boil your vegetables because the nutrients will leach out into the water and when you drain off the water, you lose all your nutrients! Try steaming instead as this is the best way to keep your vegetables nutritious.
- If you must use oil, use olive or canola oil. These are healthier fats than butter or lard because they have no saturated fat or cholesterol.
- Microwave cooking can actually be a healthful way to cook vegetables because it requires little time and doesn't require added fat. You can buy steam bags at the store, which can help you prepare steamed vegetables in a flash!
- Try preparing more fruit based desserts. You can bake apples, poach pears, and grill peaches and pineapple!

Fun Facts

- Thomas Jefferson is credited with introducing macaroni to the United States.
- Scientists have found remains of stone hearths used for cooking that date back 250,000 years!
- The Chinese are on record as having eaten millet pasta as early as 5,000 BC.

References:

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Healthy Cooking *Make Healthy Taste Great!*



Healthy Cooking

You don't have to be a gourmet chef or buy expensive cookware to begin cooking healthier. There are many basic cooking techniques that anyone can master to start making healthier food.

Using healthier cooking methods allow you to enjoy your favorite foods and meals, while lowering the fat and calories.

Learning what these methods are and how to use them can help to retain the flavor and nutrients of your food without having to add extra salt and fat. This means you can enjoy your food and it still be good for you!

Why Use Healthier Cooking Methods?

Good nutrition is not just about choosing the "right" foods to eat, it involves learning to prepare those foods in ways that will maintain their nutritional benefits. The cooking methods we choose can have a profound effect on the nutrient content of the foods we prepare.

By using healthier techniques you can also cut fat and calories. For instance, each tablespoon of oil you use has about 14g of fat and over 100 calories. Think about how many tablespoons of oil are used when frying. The average healthy adult eating 1,800 calories per day only needs approximately 70g of fat each day. If you do the math, that's a big chunk of your daily fat needs by just eating fried foods!



Healthy Cooking Methods

Baking - Use this method to cook vegetables, seafood, poultry, and lean meat. You can even bake fruits for a healthy dessert! Just place in a pan or dish and either cover with foil to retain more moisture, or leave uncovered. Baking generally doesn't require that you add extra fat, which means it is a very low fat way to prepare meals!

Braising - This method involves first browning an ingredient (poultry, vegetables, seafood, etc.) in a pan and then slowly cooking it with added liquid, such as water or broth.

Grilling and broiling - Both of these methods expose foods to direct heat. To grill outdoors, place food on a grill rack above a bed of heated charcoal. To broil indoors, put the oven on broil and place food under the broiler rack. Watch it carefully because this method can burn the food easily!

Poaching - To poach foods, slowly simmer in water or broth until tender. This allows the food to retain its shape and texture and it requires little to no added fat!

Sautéing - This method is generally used for quickly cooking small or thin pieces of food. To cook without adding fat, choose a good non-stick pan or cook in water or broth.

Steaming - This is one of the healthiest techniques as it retains almost all of the nutrients in a food, if not overcooked. Simply place the food in a perforated basket that is suspended over boiling liquid. Using broth or any other flavorful liquid can add flavor to the food while it steams.

Stir-frying - This traditional Asian method cooks small pieces of food quickly at high heat. While it is generally better to use a non-stick pan, you can add a little oil or cooking spray to any pan you have.

Herbs and spices - Learning to use herbs and spices is one of the easiest ways to flavor your food without excess salt and fat. If you choose to use dried herbs, add them in the earlier stages of cooking, while adding fresh herbs towards the end.

It's not only important to learn how to utilize these methods at home, but it's also helpful to remember these methods when ordering at a restaurant. Knowing which entrées are cooked in healthier ways is a great way to eat healthy when dining out as well.

So go grab some of your favorite vegetables and some chicken or fish and start experimenting! Trial and error is the only way to become comfortable with new methods of cooking.