

# Cooking Terms Glossary

## -A-

### **AERATE**

To pass dry ingredients through a fine-mesh sifter so large pieces can be removed. The process also incorporates air to make ingredients like flour, lighter. Sifting dry ingredients aerates them while distributing small amounts of chemical leaveners or dry seasoning evenly through the mixture. Use sifters, sieves or tamis to both aerate and sift.

## -B-

### **BARD**

To tie fat around lean meats or fowl to keep them from drying out during roasting. The fat bastes the meat while it cooks, keeping it moist and adding flavor. The fat is removed a few minutes before the meat is finished, allowing the meat to brown. Barding is necessary only when there is no natural fat present.

### **BASTE**

To brush or spoon food as it cooks with melted fat or the cooking juices from the dish. Basting prevents foods from drying out and adds color and flavor.

### **BEAT**

To mix thoroughly with a spoon, whisk or beaters until well-combined and very smooth.

### **BLANCH**

To cook raw ingredients in boiling water briefly. Blanched vegetables are generally "shocked" i.e. plunged immediately and briefly into an ice water bath to stop the cooking process and preserve color and crunch.

### **BLEND**

To combine two or more ingredients together with a spoon, beater or blender.

### **BOIL**

To heat a liquid to its boiling point, until bubbles break the surface. "Boil" also means to cook food in a boiling liquid.

### **BONE**

To remove the bones from meat, fish or fowl. Use a sharp boning knife and angle the blade toward the bone to avoid tearing or nicking the flesh.

### **BRAISE**

To cook food, tightly covered, in a small amount of liquid at low heat for a long period of time. Sometimes, the food is first browned in fat. The long, slow cooking tenderizes meats by gently breaking down their fibers. The braising liquid keeps meats moist and can be used as a basis for sauce. Use wine, stocks or water as components in braising liquid.

**BROIL**

To cook food directly above or under a heat source. Food can be broiled in an oven or on a grill.

**BROWN**

Generally, when a recipe says to "brown", it refers to cooking quickly in a hot pan, on the grill or under a broiler until all sides turn golden or brown in color. The purpose is to seal in the juices and add flavor.

**BRUSH**

To apply a liquid, like a glaze, to the surface of food using a pastry brush.

**BUTTERFLY**

To split food (meat, fish, fowl) down the center, cutting almost, but not completely through. The two halves are then opened flat to resemble a butterfly.

-C-

**CANEL**

To create small V-shaped grooves over the surface of fruits or vegetables for decorative purposes using a canelle knife. The fruit or vegetable is then sliced, creating a decorative border on the slices.

**CARAMELIZE**

To heat sugar until it liquefies and become a clear caramel syrup ranging in color from golden to dark brown. Fruits and vegetables with natural sugars can be caramelized by sauteeing, roasting or grilling, giving them a sweet flavor and golden glaze.

**CHIFFONADE**

To slice into very thin strips or shreds. Literally translated from French, the term means "made of rags".

**CHOP**

To cut food into bite-size pieces using a knife. A food processor may also be used to chop food. Chopped food is more coarsely cut than minced food.

**CLARIFY**

To remove sediment from a cloudy liquid, thereby making it clear. To clarify liquids, such as stock, egg whites and/or eggshells are commonly added and simmered for approximately 15 minutes. The egg whites attract and trap particles from the liquid. After cooling, strain the mixture through a cloth-lined sieve to remove residue. To clarify rendered fat, add hot water and boil for about 15 minutes. The mixture should then be strained through several layers of cheesecloth and chilled. The resulting layer of fat should be completely clear of residue. Clarified butter is butter that has been heated slowly so that its milk solids separate and sink, and can be discarded. The resulting clear liquid can be used at a higher cooking temperature and will not go rancid as quickly as unclarified butter.

**CONGEAL**

To turn liquid into solid by chilling.

**CREAM**

To beat an ingredient or ingredients with a spoon or beaters until light and fluffy.

**CUBE**

Cut into squares, size of which is determined by the recipe, generally between 1/2 to 2-inches.

**CURE**

To treat food by one of several methods for preservation purposes. Examples are smoking, pickling - in an acid base, corning - with acid and salt, and salt curing - which removes water.

**CUT IN**

To work a solid fat, such as butter, shortening or lard, into dry ingredients. This is accomplished by using a pastry blender, 2 knives, a fork, or even the fingers. Most often, the fat should be chilled first and "cut in" just enough for small lumps about the size of a pea to form.

**-D-**

**DEEP-FRY**

To cook food in hot fat or oil deep enough so that it is completely covered. The temperature of the fat is extremely important and can make the difference between success and failure. When the fat is not hot enough, the food absorbs fat and becomes greasy. When the fat is too hot, the food burns on the exterior before it has cooked through. Fat at the correct temperature will produce food with a crisp, dry exterior and moist interior. An average fat temperature for deep-frying is 375 degrees, but the temperature varies according to the food being fried. Use a deep fryer, an electric fry pan or a heavy pot and a good kitchen thermometer for deep frying.

**DEGLAZE**

To remove browned bits of food from the bottom of a pan after sauteing, usually meat. After the food and excess fat have been removed from the pan, a small amount of liquid is heated with the cooking juices in the pan and stirred to remove browned bits of food from the bottom. The resulting mixture often becomes the base for a sauce.

**DICE**

To cut food into tiny cubes (about 1/8- to 1/4-inch).

**DRAIN**

To pour off fat or liquid from food, often using a colander.

**DREDGE**

To lightly coat food that is going to be fried with flour, breadcrumbs or cornmeal. The coating helps to brown the food and provides a crunchy surface. Dredged foods need to be cooked immediately, while breaded foods, those dredged in flour, dipped in egg then dredged again in breading, can be prepared and held before cooking.

**DUST**

To sprinkle lightly before or after cooking with dry ingredients.

-E-

**EMULSIFY**

To bind together two liquid ingredients that normally do not combine smoothly, such as water and fat. Slowly add one ingredient to the other while mixing rapidly. This action disperses tiny droplets of one liquid in the other. Mayonnaise and vinaigrettes are emulsions. Use a good whisk for steady, even emulsification.

-F-

**FILLET**

To create a fillet of fish or meat by cutting away the bones. Fish and boning knives help produce clean fillets.

**FLAKE**

To gently separate into small pieces, usually with a fork or your fingers. Most commonly refers to cooked fish which, because of its texture, flakes easily.

**FOLD**

To combine a light mixture like beaten egg whites with a much heavier mixture like whipped cream. In a large bowl, place the lighter mixture on top of the heavier one. Starting at the back of the bowl, using the edge of a rubber spatula, cut down through the middle of both mixtures, across the bottom of the bowl and up the near side. Rotate the bowl a quarter turn and repeat. This process gently combines the two mixtures.

**FRY**

To cook food (non-submerged) in hot fat or oil over moderate to high heat. There is very little difference between frying and SAUTEING although sauteing is often thought of as being faster and using less fat.

-G-

**GARNISH**

To enhance finished foods with flavor or visual appeal by using other edible products on the plate. The most common are herbs, but there are many other possibilities including, but not limited to, fruits, small vegetables and edible flowers.

**GLAZE**

The process of dipping or brushing, usually with a sugar-based liquid, to give flavor and a shiny finish to foods, such as roasted or grilled meats, fried pastries or baked goods.

**GRATE**

To reduce a large piece of food to coarse or fine threads by rubbing it against a rough, serrated

surface, usually on a grater. A food processor, fitted with the appropriate blades, can also be used for grating. The food that is being grated should be firm. Cheese that needs to be grated can be refrigerated first for easier grating.

### **GRILL**

To cook food on a grill over hot coals or other heat source. The intense heat creates a crust on the surface of the food which seals in the juices. The grill should be clean and must be heated before the food is laid on it. The food can also be basted and seasoned.

### **GRIND**

To reduce food to small pieces by running it through a grinder. Food can be ground to different degrees, from fine to coarse.

**-H-**

### **HOMOGENIZE**

To create an emulsion by reducing all the particles to the same size. The fat globules are broken down mechanically until they are evenly distributed throughout the liquid. Homogenized milk and some commercial salad dressings are two examples of homogenized foods.

**-I-**

### **INFUSE**

To steep an aromatic ingredient in hot liquid until the flavor has been extracted and absorbed by the liquid. Teas are infusions. Milk or cream can also be infused with flavor before being used in custards or sauces.

**-J-**

### **JOINT**

To cut meat and poultry into large pieces at the joints using a very sharp knife.

### **JULIENNE**

To cut food into thin sticks. Food is cut with a knife or mandoline into even slices, then into strips.

**-K-**

### **KNEAD**

To mix and work dough into a smooth, elastic mass. Kneading can be done either manually or by machine. By hand, kneading is done with a pressing-folding-turning action. First the dough is pressed with the heels of both hands and pushed away from the body so the dough stretches out. The dough is then folded in half, given a quarter turn, and the process is repeated.

**-L-**

### **LINE**

To cover the bottom and sides of a cassoulet, mold or terrine with a thin layer of bacon, pork

fat, flavorings or pastry. Cake pans are frequently lined with parchment paper to prevent the cake from sticking to the pan after baking.

## **-M-**

### **MACERATE**

To soak foods, usually fruit, in liquid so they absorb the liquid's flavor. The macerating liquid is usually alcohol, liqueur, wine, brandy or sugar syrup. Macerate is also frequently applied to fruits sprinkled with sugar, which intensifies natural flavor of the fruit by drawing out its juices.

### **MARINATE**

To soak food in a seasoned liquid mixture for a certain length of time. The purpose of marinating is to add flavor and/or tenderize the food. Due to the acidic ingredients in many marinades, foods should be marinated in glass, ceramic or stainless steel containers. Foods should also be covered and refrigerated while they are marinating. When fruits are soaked in this same manner, the process is called macerating.

### **MASH**

To crush a food into smooth and evenly textured state. For potatoes or other root vegetables, use a ricer, masher or food mill. While food processors provide a smooth texture more like a puree or a paste, they should not be used for potatoes.

### **MINCE**

To cut food into very tiny pieces. Minced food is cut into smaller, finer pieces than diced food.

### **MOUNT**

To whisk cold butter, piece by piece, into a warm sauce for smooth texture, flavor and sheen. Each piece of butter must be thoroughly incorporated before a new piece is added so that the sauce does not break (or separate into liquid and fat).

## **-N-**

### **NAP**

To completely coat food with a light, thin, even layer of sauce.

## **-O-**

### **OPEN FACED**

A sandwich prepared with just one piece of bread which is topped with a wide variety of meats, vegetables, cheeses and heated or not.

## **-P-**

### **PARBOIL**

To boil food briefly in water, cooking it only partially. Parboiling is used for dense food like carrots and potatoes.

**PARE**

To remove the thin outer layer of foods using a paring knife or a vegetable peeler.

**PEEL**

To remove the rind or skin from a fruit or vegetable using a knife or vegetable peeler.

**POACH**

To cook food by gently simmering in liquid at or just below the boiling point. The amount of the liquid and poaching temperature depends on the food being poached.

**POUND**

Pounding thinner cuts of meat tenderizes it by breaking down muscle. Kitchen mallets are generally used for pounding, but it can be done using a small frying pan as well. First place the piece of meat between two pieces of plastic wrap or wax paper.

**PUREE**

To grind or mash food until completely smooth. This can be done using a food processor or blender or by pressing the food through a sieve.

**-Q-****QUADRILLER**

To mark the surface of grilled or broiled food with a crisscross pattern of lines. The scorings are produced by contact with very hot single grill bars which brown the surface of the food. Very hot skewers may also be used to mark the surface.

**QUENCH**

To quickly place a heated object in cold water. This is usually done to either stop the cooking process or to separate the skin of an object from the meat. This process is sometimes referred to as "shocking."

**-R-****REDUCE**

To thicken or concentrate a liquid by boiling rapidly. The volume of the liquid is reduced as the water evaporates, thereby thickening the consistency and intensifying the flavor.

**ROAST**

To oven-cook food in an uncovered pan. The food is exposed to high heat which produces a well-browned surface and seals in the juices. Reasonably tender pieces of meat or poultry should be used for roasting. Food that is going to be roasted for a long time may be barded to prevent drying out.

**-S-****SAUTE**

To cook food quickly in a small amount of fat or oil, until brown, in a skillet or saute pan over

direct heat. The saute pan and fat must be hot before the food is added, otherwise the food will absorb oil and become soggy.

### **SCALD**

To dip fruits or vegetables in boiling water in order to loosen their skins and simplify peeling. The produce should be left in the water for only 30 seconds to prohibit cooking, and should be shocked in an ice water bath before the skin is removed

### **SCALE**

To remove the scales from the skin of a fish using a dull knife or a special kitchen tool called a fish scaler.

### **SEAR**

To brown meat or fish quickly over very high heat either in a fry pan, under a broiler or in a hot oven. Searing seals in the food's juices and provides a crisp tasty exterior. Seared food can then be eaten rare or roasted or braised to desired degree of doneness.

### **SEASON**

To add flavor to foods.

To coat the cooking surface of a new pot or pan with vegetable oil then heat in a 350 degree oven for about an hour. This smoothes out the surface of new pots and pans, particularly cast-iron, and prevents foods from sticking.

### **SEED**

To remove the seeds from fruits and vegetables.

### **SHRED**

To cut food into thin strips. This can be done by hand or by using a grater or food processor. Cooked meat can be shredded by pulling it apart with two forks.

### **SIEVE**

To strain liquids or particles of food through a sieve or strainer. Press the solids, using a ladle or wooden spoon, into the strainer to remove as much liquid and flavor as possible.

### **SIFT**

To pass dry ingredients through a fine mesh sifter so large pieces can be removed. The process also incorporates air to make ingredients like flour, lighter. Synonymous with AERATE.

### **SIMMER**

To cook food in liquid over gentle heat, just below the boiling point, low enough so that tiny bubbles just begin to break the surface.

### **SKEWER**

To spear small pieces of food on long, thin, pointed rods called skewers.

### **SKIM**

To remove the scum that rises to the surface from a liquid when it is boiled. The top layer of the liquid, such as the cream from milk or the foam and fat from stock, soups or sauces, can be



removed using a spoon, ladle or skimmer. Soups, stews or sauces can be chilled so that the fat coagulates on the surface and may be easily removed before reheating.

### **SKIN**

To remove the skin from food before or after cooking. Poultry, fish and game are often skinned for reasons of appearance, taste and diet.

### **SMOKE**

To expose fresh food to smoke from a wood fire for a prolonged period of time. Traditionally used for preservation purposes, smoking is now a means of giving flavor to food. Smoking tends to dry the food, kills bacteria, deepens color and gives food a smoky flavor. The duration of smoking varies from 20 minutes to several days. The most commonly used woods are beech, oak and chestnut to which aromatic essences are often added. Small home smokers are now available.

### **STEAM**

To cook food on a rack or in steamer basket over a boiling liquid in a covered pan. Steaming retains flavor, shape, texture, and nutrients better than boiling or poaching.

### **SUPREME**

To remove the flesh sections of citrus fruit from the membranes. Using a sharp knife, cut away all of the skin and pith from the outside of the fruit. Place the knife between the membrane and the flesh of one section and slice down. Turn the knife catching the middle of the fruit. Slice up, removing each section sans membrane.

### **SWEAT**

To cook vegetables in fat over gentle heat so they become soft but not brown, and their juices are concentrated in the cooking fat. If the pan is covered during cooking, the ingredients will keep a certain amount of their natural moisture. If the pan is not covered, the ingredients will remain relatively dry.

**-T-**

### **TENDERIZE**

To make meat more tender by pounding with a mallet, marinating for varying periods of time, or storing at lower temperatures. Fat may also be placed into a piece of meat to make it more tender during cooking.

### **TRUSS**

To secure food, usually poultry or game, with string, pins or skewers so that it maintains a compact shape during cooking. Trussing allows for easier basting during cooking.

**-U-**

### **UNLEAVENED**

The word which describes any baked good that has no leavener, such as yeast, baking powder or baking soda.

**-V-**

**VANDYKE**

To cut zigzags in edges of fruit and vegetables halves, usually oranges, tomatoes or lemons. The food is usually used as a garnish to decorate a dish.

**-W-**

**WHIP**

To beat ingredients such as egg whites or cream until light and fluffy. Air is incorporated into the ingredients as they are whipped, increasing their volume until they are light and fluffy.

**WHISK**

To beat ingredients together until smooth, using a kitchen tool called a whisk.

**-Z-**

**ZEST**

To remove the outermost skin layers of citrus fruit using a knife, peeler or zester. When zesting, be careful not to remove the pith, the white layer between the zest and the flesh, which is bitter.