

Reese

Sy

AO

SM ny se ee e FS SP IS OS OS SS OS OS OS OS  
OF OS SS OST

rs

One cookbook says to boil broccoli, another says to steam it. Neither method actually makes broccoli

|| taste better. Over the years, the test kitchen has

learned which methods work best with specific

|| vegetables. Here's what you need to know about the most common techniques.

BOILING allows you to season vegetables as they cook (use | tablespoon table salt per 4 quarts water). However, It's easy to overcook vegetables when boiling, and this method washes away flavor. Boiled vegetables need further embellishment, such as a compound butter or

vinaigrette. Try with nonporous green vegetables,

such as green beans and snap peas.

STEAMING washes away less flavor than boiling and

leaves vegetables crisper. Doesn't allow for seasoning

vegetables and only works with small batches (1 pound non less). Try with porous or delicate vegetables | such as asparagus, broccoli, and cauliflower.

SAUTEING allows for the addition of everything

from garlic to herbs but requires constant attention and a nonstick pan. Try with peas and zucchini.

PAN-ROASTING caramelizes natural sugars in vegetables and promotes browning. Doesn't work if the pan is overloaded, and most recipes rely on tight-fitting lid to capture steam and help cook vegetables through. Try with asparagus and broccoli.

ROASTING concentrates flavors by driving off excess moisture and makes vegetables crisp. Requires at least 30 minutes (including time to heat

oven). Try with asparagus, carrots, cauliflower, green beans, and zucchini.

|| BROILING browns vegetables quickly and deeply.

Broilers require constant attention; keep food at

least 4 inches from the heating element to prevent flare-ups. Try with asparagus and zucchini.

So which techniques do we prefer? Our favorite

indoor cooking methods, such as roasting, pan-roasting, and broiling, actually add flavor to vegetables. Favorite recipes are available free at [www.cooksillustrated.com/october](http://www.cooksillustrated.com/october), where you will also find our "Guide to Grilling Vegetables."

THREE COMMON COOKING MISTAKES  
(AND HOW TO AVOID THEM)

i) The Best Way to Cook Vegetables

Vegetable side dishes often don't get much attention

and taste rather dull. How do you build flavor with a minimum of work? by KEITH DRESSER

Shopping Notes: The stalks are just as tasty as the florets, so make sure they aren't dry or cracked. Preparation: Cut florets into | 1/2-inch pieces; peel stalks and cut on bias into 1/2-inch-thick pieces.

Basic Cooking Method: Pan-roasting brings out broccoli's sweet rather than sulfurous flavors. Sauté peeled stalks from 12/4 pounds broccoli in 12-inch non-stick skillet filmed with 2 tablespoons oil for 2 minutes. To promote browning, cook over medium-high heat and do not stir. Add florets and cook until they start to brown (1 to 2 minutes), then add 3 tablespoons water, cover, and cook for 2 minutes. Remove lid and cook until water evaporates and broccoli is tender, another 2 minutes.

Favorite Recipe at [Cooksillustrated.com](http://Cooksillustrated.com) \* Pan-Roasted Broccoli with Lemon Browned Butter

1. Hold bunch of broccoli upside down on work surface. Using chef's knife, trim off florets "4 very close to their heads. Cut florets into 1/2-inch pieces.

PREPARING BROCCOLI i

2. Place each stalk on cutting board and square it off with chef's knife. Remove outer 1/2 inch of stalk, which is quite tough.



**OVERCOOKING:** Vegetables will continue to soften as they make their way to the table. To keep vegetables crisp and tender, remove them from the heat when slightly underdone. **UNEVEN COOKING:** Make sure vegetables are cut uniformly. This and sautéing. **SLOW COOKING:** Overloaded pans will cook very slowly. When roasting and sautéing, give vegetables room to brown. Piled on top of each other, they will steam and won't taste as good.

is particularly important when steaming

1 1 1 1 1 ' 1 1 ' 1 1 ' ! 1 ! ! 1 1 ' 1 1 ! ' 1 ! 1 ! 1 t  
! 1 ! ! 1 ! 1 1

## COOK'S ILLUSTRATED

### PEAS

**Shopping Notes:** Frozen peas are almost always better than fresh shell peas, which tend to be starchy, | tight, firm florets without any discoloration.

**Preparation:** Frozen peas can be used without thawing

**Basic Cooking Method:** Don't boil peas—they are Basic Cooking Method: Roasting avoids the sulfu- much better sautéed. Add frozen peas directly to pan rous smell that sometimes results when cauliflower matics (garlic and/or shallots cooked is boiled or steamed. Toss wedges from | head

ons of butter until fragrant) and cover | cauliflower with 4 tablespoons olive oil and roast on m and heat peas through (this will take foil-lined baking sheet in 475-degree oven for 25 to

wit

na fe

pan to trap steai

frozen peas to be

t 4 minutes). Add

20st flavor.

2 teaspoons sugar tol pound

Favorite Recipe at [Cooksillustrated.com](http://Cooksillustrated.com)

### ZUCCHIN

**Shopping Notes:** Zucchini weighing less than 8 ounces

Oru an

d less watery than larger ones.

Sautéed Buttery Peas with Mint and Feta Cheese

**Preparation:** Shred, discarding seeds and core,

**Basic Cooking Method:** Shredding, salting (use | 2 with 2' / pounds zucchini), and squeez- moisture from this watery vegetable, as

queeze dry

nethod, like sautéing. Toss aspoonss Olive oil and then cook

tick skillet filmed with 2 teaspoons

high heat for 4 minutes. Stir infre-

ni cooks to promote browning.

o

Tomatoes and Basil

avorite Recipe at [Cooksillustrated.com](http://Cooksillustrated.com)

## SHREDDING AND SALTING ZUCCHINI

I. Cut zucet to 3-inch

d shredding

2. Toss zucchini with salt in colander and drain 10 min- Jtes. Wrap zucchini n kitchen towel,

n batches, and ring out excess noisture.

Shred on large holes of

grater, rotating zucchini as needed

seeds and core.

= | tablespoon butter and additional 2 tablespoons sugar and cook, stirring

**TS ESSENTIAL EQUIPMEN** — In addition to the usual suspects—knife and Peel ne three items we use frequently when preparing vegetables.

**CAULIFLOWER :** **Shopping Notes:** Buy heads of cauliflower with

**Preparation:** Trim leaves and stem, then cut into large wedges.

**TEST KITCHEN ESSENTIAL: COLANDER** The mega-perforated bowl of the Precision Pierced Endurance Stainless Steel Colander (\$29.99) quickly and completely drains liquid from boiled veg- etables. This 5-quart colander fits in a large Dutch oven, making it ideal for steaming.

35 minutes. Cover pan with foil for first 10 minutes of cooking time to ensure that cauliflower cooks through. Also, place baking sheet on bottom oven rack to maximize browning. Flip wedges once bottom has browned nicely (after about 20 minutes). Favorite Recipe at [CooksIllustrated.com](http://CooksIllustrated.com) \* Roasted Cauliflower with Soy-Ginger Sauce with Sealion

## CUTTING UP CAULIFLOWER

## TEST KITCHEN ESSENTIAL: NONSTICK SKILLET

We use a large nonstick skillet to promote browning of sautéed or pan-roasted vegetables. The All-Clad Stain- less Nonstick 12-Inch Frypan (\$160) was the top performer in our kitchen tests.

**RIMMED BAKING SHEET** Asturdy baking sheet that won't buckle is a must when roasting at high temperatures. The Lincoln Foodservice Half-Size Heavy-Duty Sheet Pan (\$15.40) is large enough to hold a big batch of vegetables and stays flat during roasting.

**Shopping Notes:** Avoid extra-large carrots, which are often woody and bitter. Baby carrots are fine for roasting but too thick for glazing.

**Preparation:** Peel regular carrots and slice on bias.

**Basic Cooking Methods:** Roasting intensifies sweetness without requiring

other ingredients. Toss 1/2 pound baby carrots with 1/2 tablespoon olive oil in

broiler-pan bottom and roast in 475-degree oven for 20 minutes, shaking pan several times to promote even browning. Glazing makes carrots even sweeter

but requires more prep. Cook 1/2 pound sliced carrots with 1/2 tablespoon sugar

and 1/2 cup chicken broth in covered 12-inch nonstick skillet for 5 minutes,

Uncover and cook until liquid reduces to 2 tablespoons, 10 to 20 minutes, Add

1

frequently, until carrots are tender and evenly glazed, about 3 minutes,

i

Favorite Recipes at [CooksIllustrated.com](http://CooksIllustrated.com) 1 \*  
Roasted Baby Carrots with Ginger-Orange Glaze  
\* Glazed Carrots with Bacon and Pecans

**SLICING CARROTS ON THE BIAS** Cut carrots on bias into pieces 3/4 inch thick and 2 Inches long.

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2007