

COOKING FRESH VEGETABLES

Roasted,
stir-fried,
and steamed
vegetables

Oven roasting brings out the flavor and the natural sweetness of vegetables.

Oven Roasted Vegetables

Select two or more vegetables:

- Beets
- Bell peppers (any color)
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Eggplant
- Mushrooms
- Onion
- Potatoes (peeled or unpeeled)
- Sweet potatoes (peeled)
- Winter squash (peeled, Butternut, Acorn, or Hubbard)
- Zucchini and other summer squash

Seasonings

1 tablespoon vegetable oil for every 4 cups of raw prepared vegetables.

For every 4 cups of raw vegetables, use one of the following:

½ teaspoon Italian herb mix

¼ teaspoon cumin

¼ teaspoon curry powder


½ teaspoon rosemary

Optional: add 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder and/or a dash of cayenne pepper with any of the above seasonings.

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. For each serving, prepare 1 cup of raw vegetables.
3. Wash, trim, and cut all vegetables into ½- to 1-inch cubes or slices.
4. In a mixing bowl, toss prepared vegetables with oil and seasonings.
5. Lightly oil a large shallow baking pan. Spread vegetables in a single layer in the oiled pan. If making larger amounts, use two pans so vegetables cook in a single layer.
6. Roast until vegetables are tender and start to brown, about 30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes. Larger amounts of vegetables and crowded pans will take longer. Continue to stir every 10 minutes.

Oven Fries

Follow the directions above using peeled or unpeeled potatoes cut into strips like French fries. Russet-type potatoes are best for “fries.” For more crisp or golden fries, place under the broiler for a minute or two at the end of cooking.



Wash vegetables thoroughly. Special soaps or "vegetable washes" are not needed. Use a brush to scrub root vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, and beets.

Leftover cooked vegetables should be refrigerated within 2 hours.

Stir-fried Vegetables

Good choices, grouped by cooking time needed

Group 1 Carrots
Celery
Onion

Group 2 Bok choy
Broccoli
Cabbage
Cauliflower
Mushrooms
Zucchini
Garlic, minced or crushed (use 1–2 cloves for 4 servings)
Ginger root, minced (use 1 teaspoon for 4 servings)

Other ingredients: vegetable oil, soy sauce (optional)

Preparation

- Use two or more vegetables for good color, flavor, and texture.
 - For each serving, prepare 1 cup of raw vegetables.
 - Wash, trim, and thinly slice all vegetables.
 - Place vegetables in different bowls by groups to add at different times.
 - Use 1 tablespoon vegetable oil for every 4 cups of vegetables.
 - Use a 10-inch or larger skillet for 4 cups of vegetables.
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Cooking

1. Heat oil in a skillet or wok over medium-high heat until hot, about 2 minutes. Oil should sizzle when vegetables are added.
2. Add vegetables from Group 1 and stir constantly for 1–2 minutes.
3. Add vegetables from Group 2, stirring constantly for an additional 2–3 minutes until all vegetables are just crisp tender.
4. If desired, add 2–4 tablespoons of water then cover to steam for 2 or 3 minutes to soften vegetables.
5. Season with soy sauce if desired. Use 1 tablespoon soy sauce for 4 cups of raw vegetables



All vegetables have different cooking times, depending on size and thickness. The chart lists cooking times for stovetop steaming and microwaving. In general, microwaving vegetables takes less time than stovetop cooking.

Microwave Cooking

To steam vegetables in a microwave, place washed vegetables in a microwave-safe bowl with 1–2 tablespoons of water. Use 2–4 tablespoons for potatoes, yams, or beets. Cover the bowl with microwave-safe plastic wrap or a tight-fitting lid, leaving one corner open to vent.



Steamed Vegetables


Cooking time	Vegetable	How to prepare
Cook in 5–10 minutes on stove.	Broccoli and Cauliflower	Cut off tough stems. Break or cut into pieces about 2 inches wide. Tough broccoli stems can be peeled and cooked or eaten raw.
Microwave 3–8 minutes.	Brussel sprouts	Remove tough or bruised outer leaves. Cut a thin slice from the stem, and then cut an X cut across the stem.
	Cabbage	Remove tough or bruised outer leaves. Cut cabbage head in half, and then cut into wedges or thick slices.
	Green beans	Trim off stem end. Remove “strings” if needed. Leave whole or cut into 1- to 2-inch pieces.
	Zucchini and other summer squash	Trim each end. Cut into 1-inch pieces.
Cook in 20–30 minutes on stove.	Potatoes	Peel if desired. Cut each potato into quarters, or leave small ones whole. Mash after cooking, if desired.
Microwave 4–5 minutes, stir, microwave 6 minutes or until tender.	Carrots	Peel if desired. Trim each end. Cut into 1- to 2-inch pieces or leave small carrots whole.
	Sweet potatoes, yams	Peel and cut into chunks of the same size.
Cook in 30–40 minutes on stove.	Beets	Scrub well but do not peel, trim, or cut before cooking. Skins slip off easily after beets are cooked. Cook until easy to pierce with a knife. Cool before handling. Use a fork for cutting to decrease stain on hands. Slice or cut in wedges to serve.
Microwave 15 minutes until tender.		

Stovetop Cooking

1. For each serving, prepare about 1 cup of raw vegetables.
2. Wash vegetables thoroughly. Trim and cut as described above.
3. Place prepared vegetables in a saucepan with tight-fitting lid.
4. Add ½- to 1-inch water to the bottom of the pan.
5. Bring to a boil, and then cover and reduce heat to low and simmer until desired tenderness. Check to be sure pan doesn't boil dry, especially for vegetables that take longer to cook.
6. Drain excess water. Add desired seasonings and serve.

Seasoning ideas:

- For every 4 cups add a teaspoon of olive oil, soft tub margarine, or butter.
- Add a dash of garlic powder or ½ teaspoon of dried herbs.



Greens are usually sold in “bunches” that make 2–4 servings when cooked.

Add a little vinegar to greens at the table to bring out the flavor.

Pre-washed, ready-to-use vegetables cost more.

Great Greens!

Tender greens

- Bok choy, beet greens, chard, spinach

Strongly flavored greens

- Collards, kale, mustard greens, turnip greens

Seasonings (add after cooking and draining the vegetables)

Use one or more:

- Dash of nutmeg
- Garlic clove, minced or crushed, or ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon each of oil and vinegar
- ¼ cup lean chopped ham

Wash all greens thoroughly in several changes of water. Trim off stems. Stems may be chopped and cooked with the greens. Cut greens crosswise in 1- to 2-inch strips. Small leaves can be left whole.

Cook *tender greens* in a tablespoon of oil over medium heat until just wilted. Add 2–4 tablespoons of water, cover, and cook about 5 minutes until tender. Add desired seasonings.

Cook *strongly flavored greens* in a pot of boiling water. This method helps reduce any bitterness. For one “bunch” of greens, bring two quarts of water to boil in a large saucepan (4-quart) or pot. Add the greens, reduce heat to medium high and boil for 5–10 minutes, or until desired tenderness. Drain in a colander. Put greens back in pan and add desired seasonings.

Buying and Storing Fresh Vegetables

- Many fresh vegetables are available at good prices all year. Watch for specials.
- Good quality fresh vegetables feel firm and plump and don’t have soft, decaying spots.
- Green vegetables with yellow or brown spots are old or over mature.
- Keep fresh vegetables refrigerated in plastic bags or covered containers.
- Potatoes, onions, garlic, and winter squashes should be stored in a cool, dry place, not refrigerated. Use within 2–4 weeks. Store potatoes away from light.
- Plan to use most fresh vegetables the same week you buy them. Cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, celery, and carrots will keep longer.

This material was funded in part by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Program. The Supplemental Nutrition Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local DSHS Community Service Office.

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