

# Food Preparation Techniques

## Food Preparation Techniques – Study Notes

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### 1. Overview

Food preparation techniques are the methods used to transform raw ingredients into edible dishes. Mastery of these techniques improves texture, flavor, safety, and presentation.

| Category                 | Primary Goal                                         | Typical Tools                                |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Cleaning & Pre-treatment | Remove contaminants, improve shelf-life              | Colanders, brushes, soak bowls               |
| Cutting & Shaping        | Control size, shape, and surface area                | Knives, mandolins, peelers, kitchen shears   |
| Cooking (dry-heat)       | Develop Maillard browning, caramelization, crispness | Oven, grill, sauté pan, skillet, broiler     |
| Cooking (moist-heat)     | Preserve moisture, tenderize, extract flavors        | Saucepan, stockpot, steamer, pressure cooker |
| Finishing & Plating      | Add final flavor, texture, visual appeal             | Herbs, sauces, microgreens, garnish tools    |

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### 2. Cleaning & Pre-treatment

| Technique  | Purpose                                                 | Key Steps                                                    |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Washing    | Remove dirt, pesticide residues, microorganisms         | Rinse under running water; use a brush for firm produce      |
| Soaking    | Rehydrate dried foods; reduce bitterness (e.g., olives) | Submerge in cold water; change water every 30min (if needed) |
| Blanching  | Halt enzymatic activity, set color, loosen skins        | Boil briefly (1–3min), then shock in ice water               |
| Marinating | Infuse flavor, tenderize (acidic or enzymatic)          | Combine acid/enzymes, oil, aromatics; refrigerate 30min–24h  |

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## 3. Cutting & Shaping

| Cut              | Description                              | Typical Use        |
|------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Julienne         | Thin matchstick strips (2mm × 2mm × 5cm) | Stir-fries, salads |
| Batonnet         | Larger sticks (¼in × ¼in × 2in)          | Crudités, roasting |
| Dice             | Small cubes (½in, ¼in, ?in)              | Soups, salsas      |
| Chiffonade       | Thin ribbons of leafy greens             | Garnish, salads    |
| Mincing          | Very fine pieces (2mm)                   | Sauces, dressings  |
| Rondelle / Slice | Circular or round slices                 | Grilling, sautéing |

**Safety tip:** Keep the “claw” grip on the food, fingertips tucked, and use a stable cutting board.

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## 4. Dry-Heat Cooking Methods

| Method     | Temperature Range                            | Typical Results                                     | Best-Fit Foods                                |
|------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Roasting   | 300–450°F (150–230°C)                        | Even browning, caramelized exterior, moist interior | Meats, whole vegetables, nuts                 |
| Grilling   | Direct heat 400–600°F (200–315°C)            | Charred marks, smoky flavor                         | Steaks, fish, firm vegetables                 |
| Sautéing   | 350–400°F (180–200°C) in a thin layer of fat | Quick sear, retained crunch                         | Thin cuts of meat, shrimp, quick-cook veggies |
| Pan-Frying | 325–375°F (165–190°C) with moderate oil      | Golden crust, moist interior                        | Breaded items, fish                           |