

Common Kitchen Terms

Al Dente – cooked to a firm texture, usually in reference to pasta. From the Italian for “to the tooth”, signifying that while it is cooked, it’s still firm enough to chew.

Boil – a method of cooking in water that is at least 212°F. A roiling boil will have constant movement in the pot, while a simmering boil will just have gentle occasional movement.

Chop – to prepare food by cutting it into pieces (see also Dice and Mince).

Dice – to prepare food by cutting it into small pieces (see also Chop and Mince).

Fold – to gently add an ingredient to a bowl of previously combined ingredients. Usually used in baking recipes to add a final ingredient to the mix (see also Stir and Whisk).

Fry – to cook in a layer of hot fat, usually an oil (see also Sauté).

Mince – to prepare food by cutting it into very small pieces, sometimes with the help of a food processor (see also Chop and Dice).

Poach – to cook in barely boiling water, usually in reference to eggs.

Roast – to cook with a coating of fat in the oven.

Roux – a paste of fat and thickener (usually flour) that is the base for a white sauce, or béchamel

Sauté – to fry quickly in a small amount of fat (see also Fry).

Sear – to brown meat quickly over high heat. Usually used to start cooking meat to seal in flavor, followed by a different cooking method.

Simmer – to cook just below the boiling point (see also Boil and Poach).

Stir – to mix ingredients together (see also Fold and Whisk).

Whisk – to mix ingredients together with a special tool to add air to the batter (see also Fold and Stir).

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