

Cooking and Baking Tips

Meat, poultry, and fish

- Season with herbs and spices, instead of salt, sauces, or butter
- Remove skin and fat from meat and poultry before cooking
- Cook meat or poultry on a rack, so that the fat will drain off
- Replace half of the ground beef in a recipe with texturized soy protein
- Use Canadian bacon in place of regular bacon
- Choose low-fat/low-sodium broths
- Buy meat in 4-ounce (oz) portions

Fish: Fish retains its moisture well when cooked in the microwave. A 6-oz, 1"-thick filet takes about 3 minutes to cook.

Beef: Use leaner cuts of meat, which usually are tougher, such as chuck roast, brisket, and flank steak. Stewing and braising are the best cooking methods for this type of meat.

Cook en papillote: Place fish, shellfish, poultry, and/or vegetables into pouches (traditionally heart shaped) of parchment paper or aluminum foil. Douse with wine, juice, or other cooking medium, crimp the edges to seal, and bake. This is, in essence, a steaming process.

Try these healthy recipe suggestions:

- Substitute vegetable oil and hickory-smoked turkey wings, backs, or neck meat for bacon fat, sautéing the oil and meat together for 10 minutes, and then use 1–2 teaspoons of the oil to flavor your dish
- Substitute beef tenderloin for beef rib eye, eye of the round for top round, lean pork chops for pork ribs, and any cut of venison for any cut of beef
- Use portobello mushrooms in place of beef
- To bread poultry the low-fat way, dip skinless chicken pieces in skim milk or egg white and crushed low-fat, unsweetened cereal:
 - Bake breaded chicken on a sheet that has is sprayed with nonstick cooking spray
 - For a Tex-Mex alternative, use crushed baked tortilla chips

Soups and salads

- Use a pureed potato in place of cream to thicken soup
- “Sweat” the vegetables used in soup in wine or stock instead of fat
- Substitute beans for meat in chili
- Try flavored vinegar and olive oil dressings
- Use orange or lemon juice in place of some of the oil in homemade dressings

Baked goods

- Use vegetable oil in place of shortening, butter, or margarine, whenever possible
- Try replacing half of the fat in any recipe with applesauce or mashed banana
- Substitute whole-grain flours in place of all-purpose flour
- Replace whole milk or cream with skim milk or buttermilk
- Replace whole eggs with egg substitute or egg whites (use two egg whites in place of each whole egg)
- Frost a cake with marshmallow cream—it is fat free
- Use 3 oz of unsweetened cocoa powder mixed with 1 tablespoon of soy oil in place of 1 oz of baking chocolate

Other tips

- Use plain low-fat yogurt in place of sour cream or mayonnaise
- Use nonstick pans and cooking spray instead of oil, whenever possible
- Use whipped butter in place of stick butter, if you must use butter at all
- Replace cream cheese with Neufchâtel cheese—saves 33% of the fat
- Grate fresh Parmesan on your food right before serving for a powerful punch of flavor
- Make your own fat-free tartar sauce by combining two parts low-sodium sweet relish to one part fat-free mayonnaise
- Microwave diced onion with a little liquid for 1–2 minutes instead of cooking the onion in oil on the stove

The following fruits and vegetables add sweetness to any dish:

- Caramelized onions
- Carrots
- Vine-ripened tomatoes
- Apples
- Sweet berries
- Pears
- Sweet bell peppers
- Pimientos
- Pineapple

References and recommended readings

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