



Cooking Techniques

Preparation, sauce building,
cooking methods and kitchen confidence.

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Cooking Like a Professional



Technique is what turns ingredients into a consistent result.

Professional cooking is built on control: temperature, timing, seasoning, texture and attention to detail.

- Read the dish before starting and understand the final result you want.
- Use sharp knives and organise your board safely.
- Prepare ingredients in advance so timing stays under control.
- Taste and adjust as you go instead of trying to rescue the dish at the end.
- Keep your pan, heat and seasoning working together.

Good technique gives you repeatable results.

DRY HEAT TECHNIQUES

Searing & Roasting



Key principles

- Preheat the pan or oven properly before the food goes in.
- Pat proteins dry to encourage caramelisation instead of steaming.
- Do not overcrowd the pan — space helps browning.
- Turn only when a crust has formed.
- Rest cooked meat before slicing to keep it juicy.

Roasting concentrates flavour while developing colour. Searing creates a deep, savoury crust that adds texture and aroma.

Poaching, Simmering & Blanching

When to use gentle heat

Poaching Best for delicate fish, fruit or eggs when you want tenderness.

Simmering Ideal for stocks, soups, braises and sauces that need time.

Blanching Quick cooking in boiling water, often followed by ice water, to keep colour and freshness.



Chef tips

- A simmer should be gentle movement, not a rolling boil.
- Blanch vegetables in salted water for better flavour.
- Use an ice bath only when you need to stop the cooking quickly.
- Poaching liquid should be flavoured but not overpowering.

Sauces, Emulsions & Reductions



Three methods

- Reduction: simmer a liquid to intensify flavour and thicken naturally.
- Emulsion: combine fat and liquid so they hold together smoothly.
- Mounting: finish a sauce with butter or oil for gloss and richness.

What to watch

- Taste for balance — richness may need acid.
- Do not reduce until the sauce becomes too salty.
- Strain if you want a smoother finish.
- Finish with herbs or citrus only if they improve the dish.

The sauce should support the dish, not dominate it.

KEEP COLOUR, BITE AND CONTRAST

Texture & Vegetables



Texture is part of flavour.

- Roast vegetables for sweetness and caramelisation.
- Blanch green vegetables for a fresher, lighter finish.
- Add crunch where it improves the bite of the dish.
- Use creamy, crisp and soft elements together for contrast.
- Do not overcook vegetables until they lose structure.

A well-cooked dish often has more than one texture: something tender, something crisp and something that carries moisture or sauce.

BRING THE DISH TOGETHER

Pasta & Final Finishing



Final touches

- Undercook pasta slightly before finishing it in the sauce.
- Keep some cooking water to loosen and emulsify a sauce.
- Check seasoning again just before plating.
- Use garnish with purpose — freshness, aroma, contrast or texture.
- Wipe the plate rim and simplify the finish.

Finishing is where technique becomes presentation. Small details can lift a plate from homemade to professional.

BEFORE YOU SERVE

Technique Checklist

- ☐ Have you used the right cooking method for the ingredient?
- ☐ Was the pan or oven properly preheated?
- ☐ Is the seasoning balanced?
- ☐ Does the dish need more acid, moisture or texture?
- ☐ Have you controlled the heat rather than rushed it?
- ☐ Are vegetables and garnishes still fresh-looking?
- ☐ Is the sauce the right consistency?
- ☐ Is the plate clean and the portion balanced?
- ☐ Would you serve this confidently?

Practice the basics. Repeat them well. Refine them constantly.

Free Cooking Techniques Guide - By Raymond Goldhawk

For educational and culinary inspiration.