

COOKING TERMS

We don't use a lot of these terms in this book but when you start exploring cooking further - here are ones that you will come across frequently!

- **Al dente**- Generally used in terms of pasta and rice cooking, but technically includes vegetables too. Al dente is translated as 'to the tooth' meaning something cooked but left with a bite of firmness.
- **Blanch**- A quick method of cooking food, usually green vegetables, where the item is basically heated in boiling hot water for a short period of time and then refreshed in ice cold water. This ensures that the food retains its bright colour and a firm texture.
- **Blend**- The process of combining two or more ingredients so that they become smooth and uniform in texture & lose their individual characteristics.
- **Confit**- Usually a term used to describe a method of cooking meats, where the meat is cooked in its own fat (or other fat if necessary) at a low heat.
- **Curdle**- When egg-based mixtures are cooked too quickly and the protein separates from the liquids, leaving a lumpy mixture behind.
- **Deep fry**- To cook food in a deep layer of hot oil.
- **Deglaze**- To loosen bits of food which stuck on the bottom of a pan by adding liquid such as stock or wine.
- **Dollop**- A small amount of soft food that has been formed into a round-ish shape. Yoghurt, whipped cream and mashed potatoes are all examples of foods that can be dolloped. Sometimes used as an informal measure (a big spoon of ...)
- **Grease**- Refers to applying an oil/ fat to a roasting tray or cake tin to ensure that food doesn't stick.
- **Grill**- Applying dry heat to food either from above or below. Grilling usually involves a significant amount of direct, radiant heat, and tends to be used for cooking meat and vegetables quickly
- **Grind**- To break something down into much smaller pieces, for example coffee beans or whole spices.
- **Infuse**- To allow the flavour of an ingredient to soak into a liquid until the liquid takes on the flavour of the ingredient.
- **Julienne**- Refers to a knife skill cut where the shape resembles matchsticks.
- **Knead**- To work dough into a soft, uniform and malleable texture by pressing, folding and stretching with the heel of your hand.

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- **Marinate**- To impart the flavour of a marinade into food, usually requires some time to allow the flavours to develop. Can also be used to tenderise a cut of meat.
- **Poach**- To cook in gently bubbling liquids such as a stock or a broth.
- **Purée**- Cooked food, usually vegetables, that have been mashed or blended to form a paste-like consistency.
- **Reduce**- The process of simmering or boiling a liquid, usually a stock or a sauce, to intensify the flavour or to thicken the consistency.
- **Refresh**- To halt the cooking process, usually that of vegetables after being blanched, by plunging them into ice cold water.
- **Render**- Using a low heat to melt the fat away from a food item, usually a piece of meat. This rendered fat can then be used to cook with.
- **Roast**- A method of dry cooking a piece of meat or vegetables, where the hot air envelopes the food to cook it evenly and to allow it to caramelise nicely.
- **Sauté**- Cooking food in a minimal amount of oil over a rather high heat.
- **Sear** or brown- A method of cooking food over a high heat until caramelisation forms on the surface. This is often done before braising the food, to give it added flavour and is not usually intended to cook the food all the way through.
- **Shallow fry**- To cook food in a shallow layer of preheated oil.
- **Simmer**- Process of cooking in hot liquids kept just below boiling point.
- **Steam**- A cooking process that places foods above, not in, water that is boiling or hot enough to produce steam that cooks the foods with a moist hot air. Steaming enables foods to keep their natural flavour, colour, shape & nutritional value better than when boiled or simmered in water.
- **Sweat**- This refers to the gentle cooking of vegetables in butter or oil under a lid, so that their natural liquid is released to aid the cooking process. Often vegetables cooked this way will end up looking translucent.
- **Whip**- The process of beating food with a whisk to incorporate air and to increase volume.
- **Whisk**- The process of using a whisk to incorporate air into food or to blend ingredients together smoothly.
- **Zest**- Refers to removing the outer part of citrus (called the zest) either by using a grater, a peeler or a knife.