

Low fat cooking methods

Say goodbye to deep frying, knobs of butter and lard and food swimming around in swathes of artery clogging fat.

Say hello to steaming, spray oils, griddling, and grilling!

Cutting back on the amount of fat in your diet is important for heart health, cancer prevention weight control and overall health. Making small changes to what and how you cook can make a huge difference to your fat intake. After all the effort you have put into changing the quality and quantity of food you eat, it would be a shame to waste those efforts on bad cooking methods that use lots of fat.

So how can you reduce the amount of fat you use in cooking?

- Try using a spray oil – this gives a small measured amount of fat in one handy spray.
- Consider marinating foods with lemon juice, stock, soy sauce, herbs, spices or wine.
- If you need to use oil, always measure it using a teaspoon – avoid pouring straight from the container. Choose oils high in polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fat.
- Use a brush to apply a small amount of oil to larger food items.
- If you are stir frying or sauteing vegetables, forget the oil altogether and try using a few tablespoons of stock, wine or tomato juice.

Low fat cooking methods:

| Method | Notes | Best types of food |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Griddling | A good alternative to frying, resulting in foods with a char-grilled outer whilst remaining moist and tender inside. This doesn't require any oil and keeps the food off the base of the pan to allow fat to drain freely. | Steak-type cuts of meat, poultry breast meat, bacon, vegetable chunks |
| Grilling | Another good alternative to frying – which achieves similar results. Ingredients with a delicate texture that can easily dry out, such as white fish or chicken breasts will require brushing with a tiny bit of oil. | Steak-type cuts of meat, poultry breast meat, fish fillets/steaks, bacon, vegetable chunks. |
| Roasting | Always stand meat on a rack over a tray or roasting tin to allow fat to drain away. When making gravy, use stock or vegetable water rather than the meat juices. | Joints of meat, poultry legs/wings |
| Braising/stewing/casseroling | Choose lean ingredients and remove visible fat or skin. Skim off any visible fat during cooking. Or, if possible prepare in advance and then chill for several hours. The fat will then solidify and be easier to remove. | Any tougher cuts of meat |

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| Steaming | A fat-free and rapid method of cooking. Foods retain their colour, flavour and texture and fewer nutrients leak out. Herbs and other flavourings can be added to the cooking liquid to give an aromatic flavour. | Vegetables, most meats, poultry and fish. |
| Baking | Ideal method for foods with a delicate texture or flavour. Again, no fat is required. Foil- or baking parchment- wrapped parcels retain moisture and flavour. Fruit juice, wine, stock and fresh herbs can add extra flavour. | White fish, chicken |

These small changes in cooking methods really do add up to big fat savings:

Compare these methods of cooking chips and potato wedges:

Chips:

Fried in corn oil 165g
 Energy 312 kcals
 Fat 11.1g
 Saturated fat 2.2g

Potato wedges:

Oven roasted 165g
 Energy 246 kcals
 Fat 7.4g
 Saturated fat 1.0g

Overall, there is a saving of 66 kcals, 3.7g fat, and 1.2g saturated fat

Similarly, consider the difference between frying and steaming fish.

Fish in batter (per 100g):

Energy 247 kcals
 Fat 15.4g
 Saturated fat 1.8g

Fish steamed (per 100g):

Energy 83 kcals
 Fat 0.9g
 Saturated fat 0.2g

Steaming the fish results in a saving of 164 kcals, 14.5g fat and 1.6g saturated fat.