



Different Ways to Cook Food and Why We Use Them

KS4 DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

KS3 SCIENCE

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What Does Cooking Actually Do?

Cooking is more than just making food hot. When we cook, we use **heat energy** to change the way food looks, tastes, and feels. Heat breaks down tough fibres in meat, makes vegetables softer, and kills harmful **bacteria** that might make us ill. Different cooking methods use heat in different ways, and we pick the right method depending on what food we're cooking and what we want the end result to taste like.

Boiling — Water Does the Work

Boiling means cooking food in hot water at **100 degrees Celsius**. This is perfect for pasta, rice, and potatoes because the water transfers heat all around the food evenly. Boiling also softens hard vegetables quickly. However, some nutrients escape into the water, so boiled vegetables aren't always as healthy as other cooking methods.

Think of it like a warm bath for your food — the hot water surrounds everything and makes it tender all over.

Frying — Fast and Tasty

Frying uses hot oil instead of water. Oil gets much hotter than water — up to **180 degrees Celsius** — so food cooks quickly and gets a crispy, golden outside. This is why chips taste so good! But fried food contains more fat, so it's not something to eat every day.

Baking and Roasting — Dry Heat Magic

Baking and **roasting** use dry heat in an oven, usually between **160 and 200 degrees Celsius**. Baking is for cakes and bread, while roasting is for vegetables and meat. Dry heat creates flavours you can't get any other way — like the brown, crispy skin on roasted chicken.

Think of it like sitting by a warm fire instead of jumping in a pool — the gentle, surrounding heat cooks food slowly and evenly.

Grilling — Hot and Smoky

Grilling puts food directly over very hot flames or coals. This creates those dark, striped marks and a smoky flavour. It's brilliant for burgers, sausages, and vegetables, but you have to watch carefully so food doesn't burn.

Steaming — Healthy and Gentle

Steaming uses hot water vapour to cook food without it touching the water. Steam is gentler than boiling, so vegetables keep more of their colour, texture, and nutrients. This makes steaming one of the healthiest cooking methods.

Choosing Your Method

We pick different cooking methods for different reasons. Some are faster, some make food healthier, and some create amazing flavours. Understanding cooking methods helps us become better cooks and make smarter choices about what we eat.