

Steaming veggies



Steamed veggies are simple, tasty, and very good for your health. Preparing vegetables in this manner is a great way to meet MyPlate's goal of filling half your plate with fruits and veggies at each meal, without adding a lot of fat or salt. Plus, using steamed veggies to displace more calorie-dense, nutrient-light foods can save you around 300 calories per meal. That's saving over 100,000 calories per year!

Simple Steaming Steps

1. **Chop** your veggies.
2. **Prep** your steamer.
3. **Cook** and enjoy!

Step One: Chop

Wash the vegetables you would like to steam, then place them on a sturdy cutting board and grab a sharp knife.

- The smaller your veggies are, the quicker they will cook.
- The type of veggies that you steam also matters -- some take longer to cook than others.
 - Zucchini, bell peppers, and mushrooms don't take very long to cook thoroughly.
 - Carrots, potatoes, and squash, on the other hand, all take longer to cook.

Once your veggies are washed, chopped and ready to go, it's time to prep your steamer.

Step Two: Prep

- To steam your veggies, you need a steamer basket. You can pick one up at almost any grocery store or you can order it online.
- Place the basket in a saucepan and add water. Fill until the water is about

1/2 inch from the bottom of the steamer.

- Bring the water to a boil. Once it is happily bubbling away, it's time for step three: cooking.

Step Three: Cook

- Once the water has begun to boil, place the veggies in your mix that will take longer to cook in the steamer basket.
- Cover the pan with a lid, then check your vegetables every few minutes. Once they begin to get tender, add the rest of your veggies and cook until everything is tender but still crisp.
- **Don't want to mess with the stovetop?** Skip step two and place your chopped veggies into a microwave-safe container. Sprinkle with water, cover, and microwave on high until they are crisp-tender, about 8 minutes.

Serving Suggestions

Steamed veggies are great when topped with a sprinkle of fresh or dried herbs, but that's not all you can do with this versatile dish. To mix things up, try some of our serving suggestions below...

- Toss veggies with a pinch of cayenne, cumin, and coriander.
- Combine vegetables with cooked pasta and pureed fresh tomato sauce (skip the salt). Top with chopped fresh herbs like oregano, basil, or rosemary.
- Make a base of cooked rice and pile on the veggies. You can combine them with a dash of soy sauce, a pinch of hot pepper flakes, and a scant teaspoon of sesame oil for an amazing taste sensation.
- Puree your vegetables for a flavorful and original sauce. Use the sauce to top chicken breast or flaky fish.

