



A WORD ON ROASTING & BROILING

The tender juicy flavor of a well roasted or broiled protein or produce is hard to match. If done properly the outside is nicely browned while the inside remains moist and delicious. **Roasting** is cooking foods by surrounding with hot dry air, which usually takes place in an oven (though this can also be done on a grill using the indirect heat method). For the record, roasting and baking are really essentially the same technique. Roasting generally applies to proteins and sometimes produce, while baking refers to breads and pastries. **Broiling** is cooking foods with radiant heat from above (sort of like the opposite of direct heat grilling). Let's take a closer look at each of these techniques:

Roasting

Roasting, being a dry cooking method, uses no liquids or cover to let steam escape. What temperature to cook at and how long to leave a particular item in the oven is a relatively subjective topic. The phrase "it depends" comes up often. The type of protein or produce, the size and shape of the item, where in the animal a protein comes from, the density of a vegetable, desired texture and doneness, are just some of the variables. For even heating, items are best roasted in the middle of the oven. Following are the two main methods of roasting:

- **Low-temperature Roasting:** Cooking at temperatures between 200-350°F constitutes low-temperature roasting. This type of roasting is often used for large pieces of proteins or produce (i.e. turkeys, large chickens, beef roasts, lamb legs, whole squash) or for cuts of protein that have a lot of fat & connective tissues. The larger the cut the lower the temperature. This helps ensure that the outer portion is not overcooked by the time the inside is done.
- **High-temperature Roasting:** Cooking at temperatures between 375-500°F constitutes high-temperature roasting. Small pieces of proteins or produce (i.e. new potatoes, asparagus, tenderloins, steaks, chops, fish filets, diced or roll cut vegetables) are ideal for this type of roasting. This helps give a nice brown crust on the outside without overcooking the inside.

Broiling

Broiling is typically used for small or tender cuts of meats, poultry, seafood, and some produce. Think meat skewers, fish filets, par-cooked vegetables. Cooking is done near the top of the oven because the heat is radiating from the top (the closer it is placed towards the top, the quicker the item will cook). Since broiling is done at a very high heat, great care should be used so as not to burn the outside and undercook the inside of a food.

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Considerations when Roasting and Broiling:

- **Increasing Browning:**
 - *Searing:* This can be done in a pan over high heat before placing into the oven.
 - *High Temperature Browning:* This is done by starting the item at a high heat (450° or above) for the beginning of the cooking, then lowering the temperature for the duration.
- **Doneness:** It is easy to tell doneness (especially with larger pieces of food) by using an instant read thermometer.
- **Choosing the Right Cut:** Both lean cuts (loins, tenderloins, etc.) and those with a lot of fats and connective tissues (legs, shoulders, etc.) are good choices for roasting.
- **Uniform Shape & Size:** The more even the shape and size of an item, the more evenly it will roast. For odd-shaped items, trussing is employed to give uniformity.
- **Brining:** A solution of salt, sometimes sugar, and water (typically 2/3 cup salt per gallon of water) can be used to infuse extra moisture into proteins. This is usually saved for pork and poultry (though corned beef and pastrami are both brined).
- **Flavor Injection:** Flavorful sauces and marinades can be injected to the inside of a protein using an injection needle.
- **Fat Side Up or Down:** Any protein with a fat cap should be roasted fat-side up to naturally baste the food during cooking. Fat back or bacon can be wrapped around or strapped to a protein to act as a fat cap; this is called *barding*.
- **Crisping the Skin:** Drying the skin well prior to cooking and basting skin (ex. chicken) with oil or other fat will help give a crispier skin.
- **Covering/Wrapping in Foil:** Covering or wrapping an item in foil can help to keep it from browning (or burning) to quickly as well as trapping in moisture (adding an element of braising). It also helps loosen the skins of produce (such as potatoes or beets) for easy removal after cooking.
- **Carry-over Cooking:** Foods will cook a bit longer after taken out of the oven. The larger the item, the more it will carry-over cook. This usually will be anywhere from 5-15°F.
- **Let it Rest:** Resting protein after it comes out of the oven will help to let the internal liquids redistribute through the protein more evenly.