



# Gotta' Eat, Can't Cook

“Show-Me-How” Picture Book Cooking

## CHRISTMAS

2009

## TURKEY DINNER



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## **Timing an Easy, Stress-Free Christmas Turkey Dinner**

This short ebook is intended to help you prepare a Christmas or any winter holiday turkey dinner as simply and easily as possible. Here's what I suggest regarding timing.

**Week before Christmas:** Order a fresh turkey from your grocery store if you want to guarantee having a fresh turkey. That way you can pick it up the day before Christmas and don't have to worry about storing it at home for days or thawing before cooking it.

**Week of Christmas:** Buy all the ingredients you need to make your dinner (take this book to the store with you).

### **2 days before Christmas:**

Thaw turkey (if frozen) in refrigerator  
Make cranberry sauce (p. 14)

### **1 day before Christmas:**

Prepare stuffing for baking and refrigerate until an hour before cooking it  
(pp. 12-16 through step 10, except don't preheat oven in step 7)  
Make chocolate pudding (p. 28)

### **Christmas Day** (start 4-5 hours before meal time)

#### **4-5 Hours Before Dinner**

Prepare turkey and let sit an hour before cooking (pp. 1-3, through step 7)  
Prepare butternut squash for roasting tossed in oil mixture (p. 21)  
Peel, cut and cover potatoes with water for mashed potatoes (p. 17)  
Prepare green beans and leave them in pot covered with water ready for cooking (p. 25)

## **About 2 ½ Hours Before Dinner**

Preheat oven to 450 degrees and start roasting turkey (p. 3, step 8 on)

## **45 Minutes Before Dinner**

Roast squash (p. 23, step 9 on)

Cook potatoes for mashed potatoes (p. 18, step 4 on)

Put cranberry sauce on table

## **½ Hour Before Dinner**

Take turkey out of the oven, check for doneness and let rest for 30

# Easy Roast Turkey

1



**Start to Finish Time:** Plan on 4 hours for a 12-14 pound turkey: 1 hour to let the bird warm to room temperature for more even cooking, about 2 hours to roast and 30 minutes to rest before carving.

**Total Cooking Time:** Roughly 2 hours at 10 minutes per pound (UNSTUFFED) for a 12-14 pound bird.

**TIP:** This is the easiest, fastest **roast turkey** recipe I know. It requires high heat, roasting the bird breast side down until the last half hour of cooking and not stuffing the bird, which only adds more cooking time and allows the meat to dry out.

## Ingredients

(for 6-8 people)

12-14 Pound Turkey (make sure to note the turkey weight printed on the price label)

Garlic Salt

Italian Seasoning

Paprika

Ground Black Pepper



## Equipment

Measuring Cup

Paper Towels

Potholders

Roasting Pan (I'm using a baking sheet)

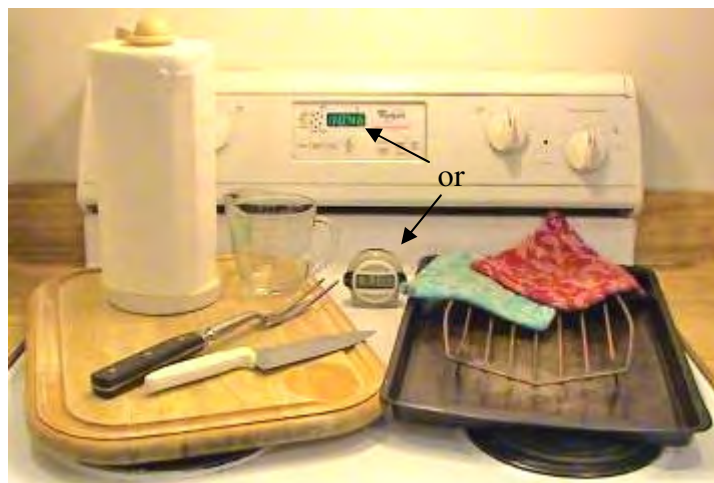
Roasting Rack (optional but helps keep the turkey out of the fat as it cooks)

Large Fork

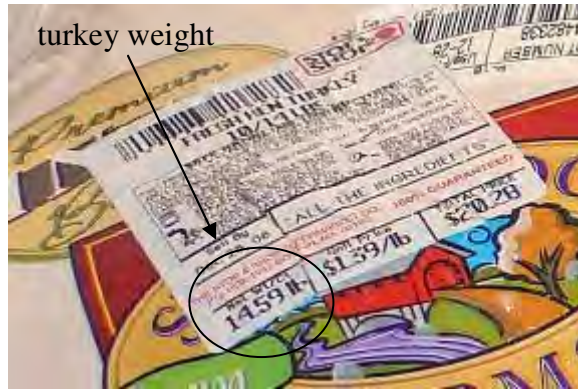
Sharp Knife

Large Cutting Board

Timer



1. Make sure to note the weight of the **turkey** on the packaging label. Then,...



...take the **turkey** out of its packaging in the sink, remove the **giblet bag** usually stored in the neck (1) and cut away any extra skin at the base of the turkey's hind (large) cavity (2).

(1)



(2)



2. Rinse out both the **neck** and **hind cavities** with cool tap water.



3. Dry the **turkey** with paper towel.



3. Put the roasting rack on the roasting pan.



4. Sprinkle in a good shake of **garlic salt**, **Italian seasoning**, **paprika** and **ground black pepper** in **BOTH** the large hind AND small neck cavity.



Italian Seasoning



Paprika

Ground Black Pepper



5. Lay the **turkey** breast side up on the roasting rack and tuck the wings behind the back as shown. (This will keep the wingtips from charring during cooking.)

(1)



(2)



6. Sprinkle **garlic salt, Italian seasoning, paprika** and **ground black pepper** on first the top (breast side up) then bottom of the **turkey**.



7. Leave the **turkey** breast side **DOWN** on the roasting rack and let it sit for about 1 HOUR, which will allow for more even cooking.



8. Set an oven rack in the lower third of the oven – you can remove any other racks from the oven - and turn on the oven to 450 degrees.



9. Add 1 cup of **water** to the roasting pan.



10. Put the **turkey** in the oven when the temperature reaches 450 degrees.



11. Set a timer for 30 minutes **LESS** than the total cooking time. (The **turkey** in these pictures was 12 ½ pounds. I discounted the ½ pound, figured 120 minutes total cooking time and set the timer for 90 minutes (120 minutes total cooking time – 30 minutes breast side up time = 90 minutes breast side down cooking time))



12. When the timer sounds, remove the **turkey** from the oven, use a large fork and wadded paper towels to turn the **bird** breast side up.



13. Put the **turkey** back in the oven and...



...cook for another 30 minutes.



14. Remove the **turkey** from the oven and check it for doneness by cutting into the inner thigh area between the fat part of the drumstick and breast. The **turkey** is done when the **breast meat** is white, the **leg meat** is light brown and the juices run clear, not red. If, however,...



...your **turkey meat** looks like the picture below,...



...keep roasting until it is completely cooked through.

15. Use a large fork to transfer the **turkey** from the roasting pan to a cutting board and...



...let the **turkey** rest for 30 minutes.



16. Start carving the **turkey** by making 3 cuts down the breast just inside the breast bone (1), at the neck (2) and down low parallel with the wings and inside the thigh (3).

(1)



(2)



(3)



17. Remove the **breast meat** (you might have to use your hands to pull the meat away from the bones) and slice it in cross sections as shown.



...scrape any residue stuck to the pan with a spoon and...



...remove as much fat as possible with a wad of paper towels.



18. Remove the plastic or metal leg tie and twist the leg away from and off the **turkey body**.



20. Add dish soap and warm water to the pan and let it soak for at least 10 minutes. Then...



19. To make clean up as easy as possible, drain all juices from the roasting pan into a measuring cup to be used for gravy. Then...



....scrub the pan with a dish brush and sponge, rinse, and the pan should be clean.



# Gravy

## Simple & Easy

6



**Preparation Time:** 2-5 minutes

**Total Cooking Time:** 5 minutes

### Ingredients

Pan Drippings

1 Can Chicken or Vegetable Broth

Heavy Cream

Corn Starch

Ground Black Pepper



### Equipment

Medium Sized Pot

Measuring Cup

Can Opener

Tablespoon



1. Pour the **pan drippings** into a measuring cup.



2. Notice where the **fat** and **meat juices** separate..



3. Remove almost all the **fat** from the **drippings** using a big spoon until what you have looks about as shown as shown in the bottom photo. Spoon the **warm fat** into an empty container (to avoid sink drain pipe clogs, do not pour **warm fat** into the sink)



4. Put the pot on the stove, add 1 can of **chicken** or **vegetable broth** and **pan drippings**, and turn on the burner to **LOW-MEDIUM**..



5. Add 2 tablespoons of **corn starch** and 2-3 tablespoons of the **warming broth** and **pan drippings** to a measuring cup. Then...



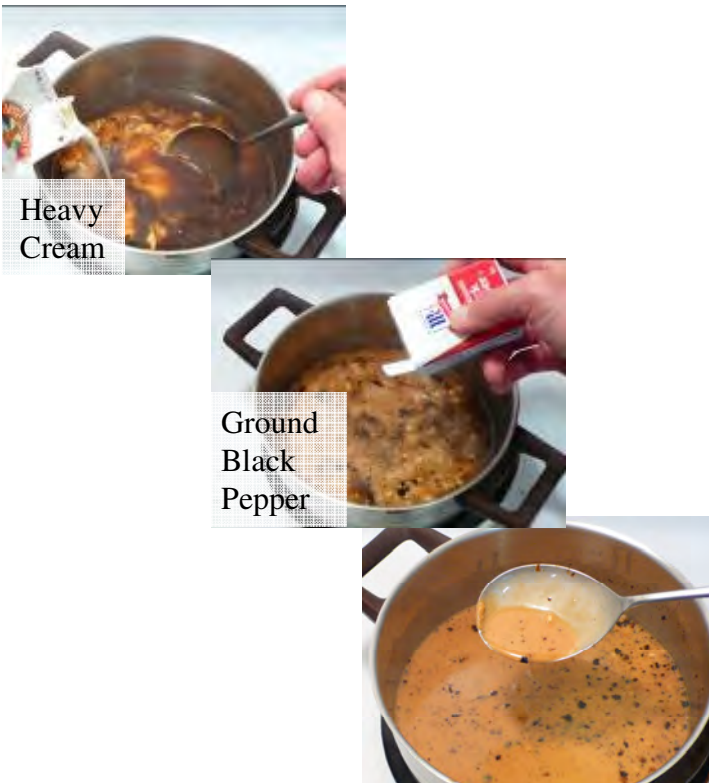
...stir until all lumps are dissolved and what you have looks like the bottom photo.



6. As soon as the pot comes to a boil, slowly add and stir the **corn starch mixture**. The **corn starch** will thicken the gravy as it cooks as shown in the bottom picture. (If you like **thicker gravy**, keep adding more **corn starch** mixed a few tablespoons of **corn starch** as shown in step 6 – to avoid lumps, just don't add **corn starch** directly to the pot.)



7. Add and stir in enough **heavy cream** and **ground black pepper** to taste so that what you have looks about as shown in the bottom photo.



# Stuffing

## Quick & Easy – From Simple to Exciting



**Tip:** This recipe shows how to make stuffing very simply and easily as well as how to use commonly found alternative ingredients to take that stuffing from “simple to exciting”.

**Preparation Time:** 5-10 minutes depending on how many ingredients are used

**Total Cooking Time:** 30 minutes

### Simple Stuffing Ingredients

(for 6 or more)

- 4 Cups of Packaged Stuffing
- 1 1/3 Cups Canned Chicken or Vegetable Broth
- 4 Tablespoons Butter or Margarine
- 1 Celery Stick
- 1/2 Onion
- Cooking Spray



### From Simple to Exciting Ingredients

- 3 Sausages (I'm using Sweet Italian Chicken Sausage but any sausage will work)
- 1 Apple
- Raisins
- Dried Cranberries
- Italian Seasoning



### Equipment

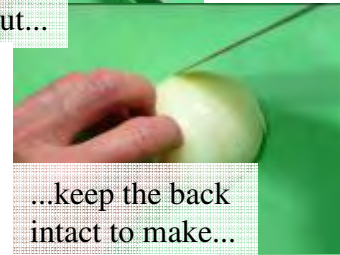
- |                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| Medium Sized Pot | Big Spoon  |
| Measuring Cup    | Can Opener |
| Baking Dish      | Timer      |
| Sharp Knife      | Pot Holder |
| Cutting Board    |            |



1. Rinse and shake dry the **celery** and **apple** (optional ingredient).



Cut slices but...



...keep the back intact to make...



...chopping in cross sections easier.

2. Prepare the **celery**, **onion** and **apple** (optional) as shown in the photos below.



Chop in half



Cut into strips



Chop in cross section



Chop in half



Chop in half again



Remove the core



Slice and chop

### Celery

### Apple (optional)

### Onion



Chop in half



Cut off both end pieces



Peel the skin

3. Warm the pot over MEDIUM heat.



4. To check the pot for the proper cooking temperature, wet your fingers with tap water and flick the water in the pot. The water should sizzle and evaporate.



5. Add 4 tablespoons of **butter** or **margarine** to the pot.



6. If you're NOT using **sausage** (optional ingredient), add the **chopped celery** and **onions** to the pot, cook for 1-2 minutes and **SKIP TO STEP 7**. If you **ARE** using **sausage**,...



...squeeze the **sausage meat** from the skin

...casing as shown here. Then...



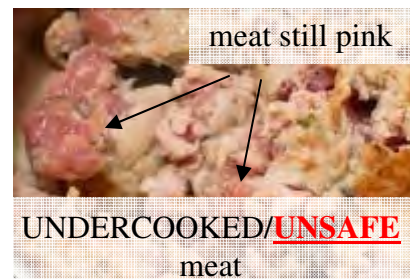
...break the **meat** into smaller pieces with a large spoon and...



...cook until the **meat** is browned throughout like this, NOT...



...this.



When the **meat** is browned, add **chopped onion** and **celery**. Then...



...cook for 2-3 minutes until what you have looks about like this.



7. Turn off the stove heat, transfer the pot to a cool burner (1) and warm the oven to 450 degrees (2).

(1)



(2)



8. Add 4 cups **dried stuffing mix** and...



...1 1/3 cups of **chicken** or **vegetable broth** (1) and stir until the **stuffing** is moist throughout (2).

(1)



(2)



9. If you're NOT adding any of the **optional "from simple to exciting" ingredients**, skip to step 10.

Otherwise, add all or your choice of the following: <sup>12</sup>

**chopped apple**



handful of **dried cranberries**



handful of **raisins**



sprinkle of **Italian seasoning**



Then stir until **all the ingredients** are well mixed together like this.



10. Spray a light coat of **cooking spray** on the inside of a baking dish (1) and scoop the **stuffing mix** from the pot into the baking dish with a big spoon (2).

(1)



(2)



11. Put the **stuffing** into the oven when the oven has warmed to 450 degrees (1) and set a timer for 30 minutes (2).

(1)



(2)



12. When the timer sounds, remove the **baked stuffing** from the oven with a pot holder and serve warm.



# Cranberry Sauce

## Fresh, Flavorful & Very Easy



**NOTE:** Fresh cranberry sauce has a great sweet & sour flavor – much better than canned cranberry sauce. And it's also no kidding as easy to make as boiled water.

**Preparation Time:** 1 minute

**Total Cooking Time:** 5 minutes

### Ingredients

- Bag of Fresh Cranberries (usually 12 ounces)
- 1 Cup Sugar (I use brown sugar but any granulated sugar will work)
- 1 Cup Orange Juice (the cranberry package recipe will usually call for water, but orange juice adds great flavor and is just as easy to use)
- 1 Cinnamon Stick

### Equipment

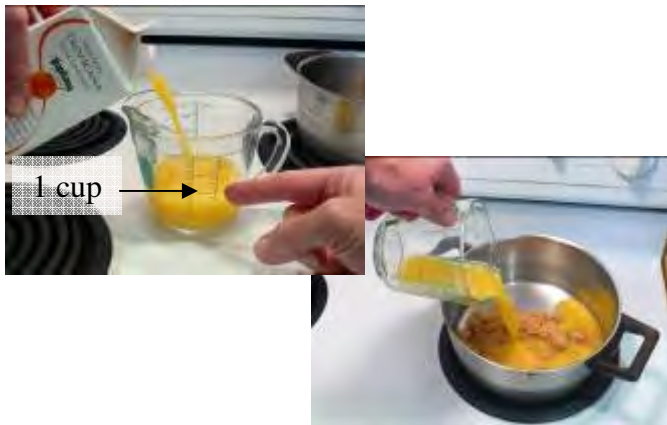
- Medium Sized Pot
- Measuring Cup
- Big Spoon
- Bowl



1. Add to a medium sized pot 1 cup (8 ounces) **brown (or any) sugar**,...



...1 cup **orange juice**,...



...1 **cinnamon stick**, and...



...1 bag of **cranberries**.



2. Turn on the stove heat to **MEDIUM-HIGH** and give the **cranberry mix** a quick stir with a big spoon.



3. Cook until the pot comes to a frothing boil and the **cranberries** just start to pop open.



4. Turn off the stove heat, put the pot on a cool burner and give the **cranberry sauce** a quick stir.



5. Let the pot sit until it is cool enough to handle. Then pour the **cranberry sauce** into a serving bowl and remove the **cinnamon stick**.



6. The **cranberry sauce** will thicken on its own as it cools to room temperature.



# Mashed Potatoes

## Quick & Easy

17



**TIP:** To ensure the best flavor and consistency, make fresh mashed potatoes right before serving them.

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Total Cooking Time:** 20-25 minutes

### Ingredients

(for 4-6)

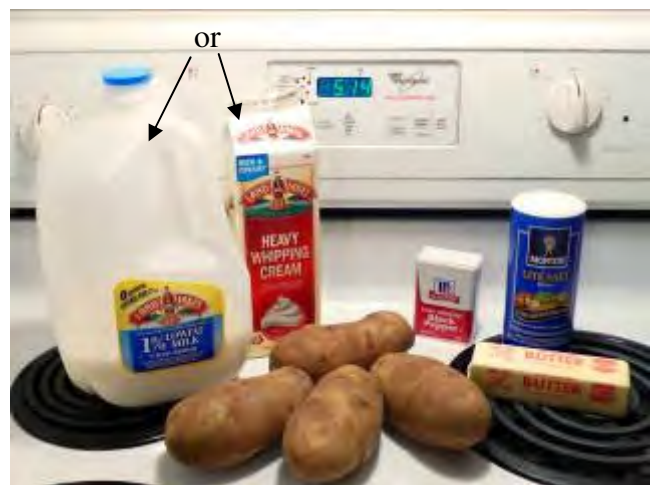
4 Idaho (or Russet) Potatoes

Milk or Heavy Cream

Butter or Margarine

Salt

Ground Black Pepper



### Equipment

Medium Sized Pot

Vegetable or Dish Brush (you can also use your hands as shown in step 1)

Vegetable Peeler

Sharp Knife

Cutting Board

Colander

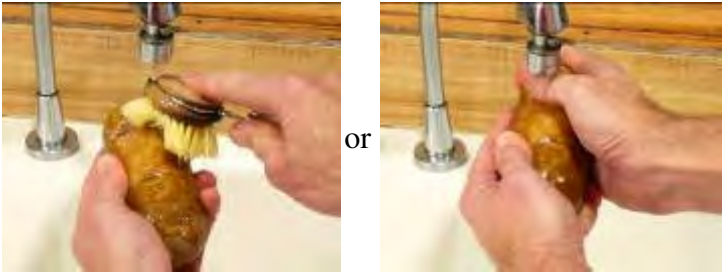
Potato Masher (can be substituted by big spoon)

Big Spoon

Timer (oven clock, egg timer, watch)



1. Either quickly brush or hand clean loose dirt from the **potatoes** under tap water.

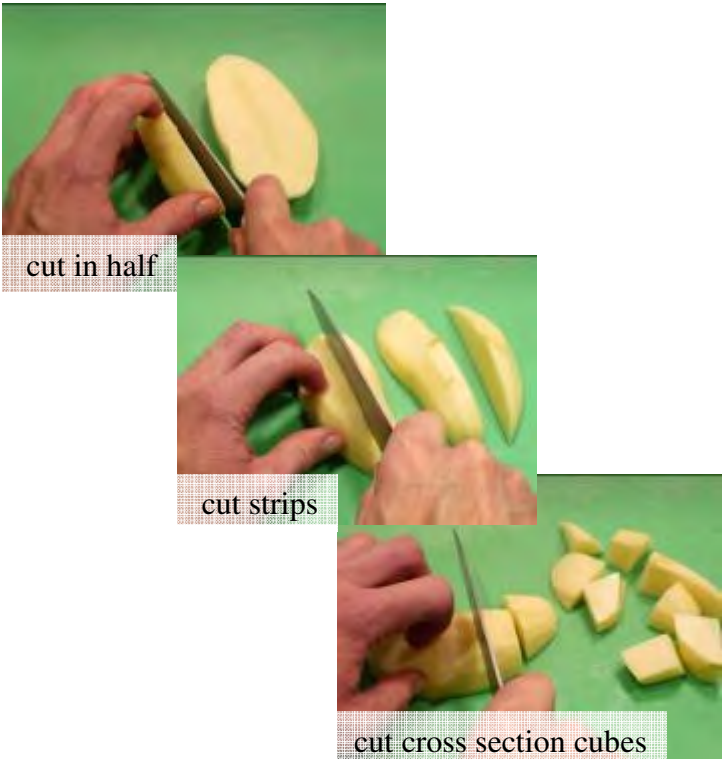


or

2. Peel the **potato skins** with a vegetable peeler and give the **peeled potatoes** another quick rinse under tap water to remove any dirt from peeling.



3. Cut the **peeled potatoes** in half lengthwise, then into strips about 1/2 - 3/4 inch wide, and finally into cubes also about 1/2 - 3/4 inch wide.



4. Put the **potatoes** into the pot, add water until the **potatoes** are just covered, then put the pot on the stove and turn on the burner to **HIGH**.



5. Cook until the water comes to a rapid boil as shown here (this will take a few minutes). Then...



...turn down the burner heat to **LOW-MEDIUM** (to keep the water from boiling over) and set the cooking timer for 15 minutes.



6. When the timer sounds, check the **potatoes** for doneness by driving the tip of a knife into one of the thickest **potato pieces** in the pot. The **potatoes** are cooked through when they are soft throughout. If the **potatoes** are still firm in the middle, keep cooking until they are soft throughout without letting them cook so much they fall apart on their own.



7. When the **potatoes** are done, pour them with the water into a colander in the sink and let them drain.



8. Put the pot back on the stove, turn the burner heat down to **LOW**, and add 4 tablespoons of **butter** or **margarine** (use the wrapper as a guide as shown in the middle photo below).



9. Pour the **cooked potatoes** from the colander into the pot as the **butter** or **margarine** melts. Then...



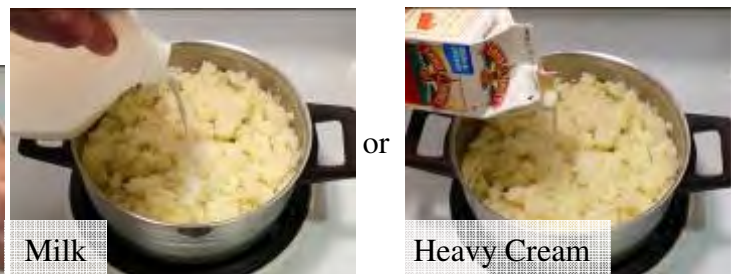
...mash the **potatoes** using either a potato masher (left) or big spoon (right) until they look like...



...this.



10. This step has to be done by feel – but it’s easy – because it all depends on the **cooked potato** moisture content and whether or not you’re using **milk** or **heavy cream**. So, start off adding a good splash of either **milk** (left) or **heavy cream** (right). Then...



...stir and...



...keep adding and mixing in small amounts of either **milk** or **heavy cream** until the **mashed potatoes** are smooth, not lumpy, but still firm in consistency as shown here.



serving bowl with a big spoon and serve warm.



11. Add and mix in as much **salt** and **ground black pepper** as shown below (more **salt** and **pepper** can always be added at the table according to individual tastes).



12. Finish by scooping the **mashed potatoes** into a

# Oven Roasted Butternut Squash

## Peel, Cut & Roast

21



**Tip:** Peeling the skin off the squash is the hardest part of this recipe. After that, this is the most hands free, easiest, fully flavorful way I've found to cook squash.

**Preparation Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Total Cooking Time:** 40-45 minutes

### Ingredients

(for 4)

1 Butternut Squash  
Olive or Vegetable Oil  
Garlic Salt  
Italian Seasoning  
Ground Black Pepper  
Balsamic Vinegar (optional)



### Equipment

Vegetable Peeler  
Sharp Knife  
Cutting Board  
Teaspoon  
Bowl  
Baking Dish  
Big Spoon  
Timer (oven clock, egg timer, watch)  
Potholder



1. Use a vegetable peeler to remove the skin from the **squash**.



2. Cut off both ends of the **squash**.



3. Use curled fingers to hold the **squash** in place, cut the **squash** in half lengthwise, and use a teaspoon to scoop out the **squash seeds**.



4. Make sure the oven rack is between the bottom third and half way up from the bottom of the oven, and pre-heat to 450 degrees.



5. Slice the **squash** lengthwise into strips 1/2 - 3/4 inch wide and then cut those strips in cross section cubes again about 1/2 - 3/4 inch wide.



6. Scoop the **squash pieces** into a bowl and add...



...just enough **olive** or **vegetable oil** to coat the **squash** lightly (start with less than you think you'll need – you can always add more later),...



...a few shakes of **garlic salt**,...



...Italian seasoning,...



...ground black pepper, and...



...a shot of balsamic vinegar (optional, but adds a good sweet & sour flavor).



7. Stir with a big spoon until the **squash** is evenly coated as shown in the bottom photo.



8. Spread the **squash** evenly on a baking sheet.



9. When the oven has reached 450 degrees, put **squash** in the oven and set a timer for 40 minutes.



10. When the timer sounds, use a potholder to remove the baking sheet from the oven. Then check the **squash** for doneness by driving the tip of a knife into one of the thickest pieces on the baking sheet as shown in the bottom photo. The **squash** is done when it is soft throughout without being firm in the middle of the piece. If the middle of your **squash piece** is still firm, cook for another 5-10 minutes and check again for doneness.



11. Scoop the **roasted squash** from the baking sheet into a serving bowl with a big spoon and serve warm.



# Green Beans with Garlic & Butter

## Quick & Easy

25



**Tip:** Cutting the ends off the green beans is the hardest part of this recipe. After that, this recipe is mostly hands free, very easy and fully flavorful.

**Preparation Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Total Cooking Time:** 10-15 minutes

### Ingredients

(for 4)

¾ Pound Green Beans

Butter or Margarine

Garlic Powder or Packaged Chopped Garlic

Salt

Ground Black Pepper



### Equipment

Sharp Knife

Cutting Board

Colander

Medium Sized Pot

Teaspoon

Big Spoon

Timer (oven clock, egg timer, watch)



1. Put the **green beans** in a colander and rinse them under cold tap water.



2. Cut both ends off the **green beans**, cut the **beans** into bite sized pieces (you don't have to be exact about this), and put the **cut beans** into a medium sized pot.



cut ends



cut to bite sized pieces



3. Fill the pot with enough water so that the **beans** just start to float.



4. Put the pot on the stove and turn on the burner heat to **HIGH**.



5. As soon as the water comes to a full boil as shown below, set a cooking timer for 2 minutes.



6. When the timer sounds, pour the **cooked green beans** and water into a colander in the sink. Then put the pot back on the stove and turn down the burner heat to **LOW**.



7. Add 1 tablespoon of **butter** or **margarine** to the pot (use wrapper as a guide as shown in the top left photo). Then...



8. Stir with a big spoon until all the ingredients are well mixed together as shown in the bottom right photo. Then...



...add the **cooked beans** from the colander,...



...scoop the **cooked green beans** into a serving bowl with a big spoon and serve warm.



...either 1/2 teaspoon of **garlic powder** or about 1 teaspoon of **packaged chopped garlic**, and...



garlic powder

or



packaged chopped garlic

...a good dash of **salt** and **ground black pepper** (you can always add more to taste at the table).



salt



ground black pepper

# Fresh Chocolate Pudding Quick & Easy



**TIP:** The base recipe using 1% or 2% milk and no optional chocolate chips is low fat. If, however, you add the optional chocolate chips (dark and/or white chips), sure the fat content will go up, but you'll also taste an incredibly fully satisfying chocolate pudding that just can't be rivaled by any commercial pudding or pudding mix.

**Preparation Time:** 20-25 minutes

## Ingredients

(for 4)

- 1/3 Cup Cocoa Powder (I recommend Dutch processed cocoa but any cocoa will do)
- 1/3 Cup Sugar
- 1/4 Teaspoon Salt
- 3 Tablespoons Corn Starch
- 2 1/2 Cups Milk (use 1 or 2% milk for a low-fat version, otherwise any milk will do)
- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract
- Chocolate Chips (optional)



## Equipment

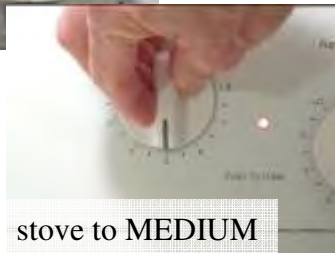
- Medium Sized Pot
- Whisk
- Measuring Cup
- Teaspoon
- Tablespoon



1. Measure 2 cups of **milk**, pour the **milk** into a medium sized pot, and turn on the stove heat to **MEDIUM**.



2 cups milk



stove to MEDIUM

2. While the **milk** warms, add to the measuring cup 1/3 cup **cocoa powder**, 1/3 cup **sugar**,...



1/3 cup cocoa powder



1/3 cup sugar

...1/4 teaspoon **salt** and 3 tablespoons **corn starch**.



1/4 teaspoon salt



3 tablespoons corn starch

3. Mix the **dry ingredients** together with a tablespoon. Then, add a few tablespoons of **milk** (you don't have to be precise – just estimate). Stir the **ingredients** together until all the lumps are smoothly dissolved into a thick paste. Add the rest of the 1/2 cup of **milk** to thin out the paste.



4. As soon as the **milk** starts to steam, add the **chocolate paste** to the pot and...



...make sure to stir the pot slowly and steadily (to avoid the **chocolate** burning to the pot bottom) until...



...the **pudding** bubbles with a boil and starts to thicken enough to coat the whisk about as shown below. As soon as the **pudding** comes to a boil,...



boiling pudding bubbles



whisk coated with pudding

...turn off the stove and transfer the pot to a cool burner where the **pudding** will continue to thicken on its own. Then...



...add and stir in 1 teaspoon of **vanilla extract** and...



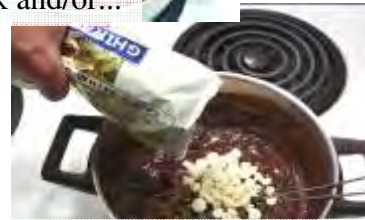
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

...either skip to step 5 or add and stir a handful of optional **chocolate chips** (dark and/or white chips) to the **pudding** now if you want them to melt completely and smoothly into the **pudding** or add them later when the **pudding** starts to cool if you want

the **chips** still slightly firm.



Add dark and/or...



white chocolate chips and...



stir them into the pudding.

5. Let the **pudding** sit until it is cool enough to touch. Then either scoop it into bowls and serve warm or refrigerate it to serve later cool.



# Roasted Chestnuts

## (Using an Oven or Toaster Oven)



**TIP:** Well, this isn't quite "chestnuts roasting on an open fire", but it's the easiest next best thing. I like using a toaster oven for convenience and power savings, but if you don't have a toaster oven, the regular kitchen oven works just as well. Just make sure you always cut into the chestnut shells before roasting as shown in step 3 to prevent the chestnuts from exploding in whichever oven you're using as it's a nasty mess to clean up (yes, I know this from experience).

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Cooking Time:** 25 minutes

### Ingredients

(for 2-4)

1 Pound Fresh Chestnuts



### Equipment

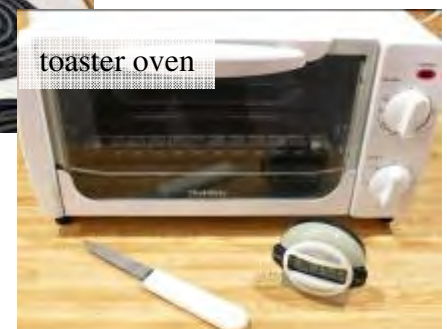
Oven or Toaster Oven

Small/Paring Knife

Baking Pan (only if you're using a big oven)

Timer

Potholder (only if you're using a big oven)



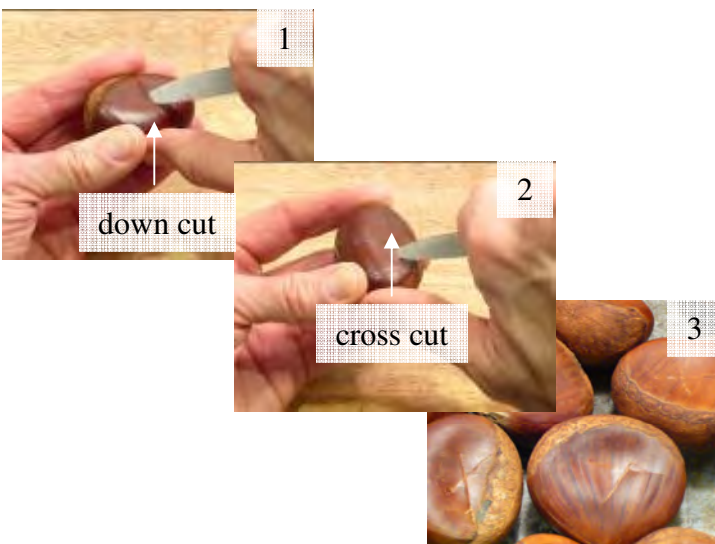
1. When buying **fresh chestnuts**, select those that are firm to the touch and don't have any signs of mold or small round shaped worm holes in their shells. Then, either roast the **chestnuts** within a few days after buying them or refrigerate them for use within 2 weeks.



2. If you're using a toaster oven, skip to step 3. Otherwise, pre-heat a kitchen oven to 450 degrees.



3. Use a sharp small/paring knife to make 1/2 - 3/4 inch long, shell penetrating shallow cuts down (1) and across (2) both the rounded and flat sides of the **chestnuts** so that the **chestnuts** look as shown in (3). (This allows steam that will form inside the **chestnuts** during cooking to escape and prevent the **chestnuts** from exploding.)



4. Do as follows according to whether you're using a big oven (left) or toaster oven (right).

### Oven Roasting

a. Set the oven rack a third to halfway from the oven bottom.



b. Put the **cut chestnuts** in a baking pan.



c. When the oven reaches 450 degrees put the **chestnuts** in the oven and....



...set a timer for 25 minutes.



### Toaster Oven Roasting

a. If your toaster oven allows, place the rack in the middle of the toaster oven.



b. Put the **cut chestnuts** on the toaster oven rack.



c. Turn on the toaster oven to 450 degrees (you might have to estimate the temperature as shown here) and...



...set a timer for 25 minutes.



d. When the timer sounds, remove the baking pan from the oven with a potholder and...



d. When the timer sounds, transfer the **roasted chestnuts** from the toaster oven to a plate.



...pour the **roasted chestnuts** onto a plate.



5. Let the **roasted chestnuts** cool for 5-10 minutes and then...



...peel them as shown and enjoy them warm.

