

A GUIDE TO

Cooking without oil

Cooking without oil can be a real game-changer for long-term health.

Just **one tablespoon of oil** contains around **14 grams of fat and 120 calories**, so a few tablespoons can quickly add up to nearly 500 calories with very little nutritional benefit. Research shows that high-fat diets—even plant-based ones—are linked to insulin resistance, cardiovascular disease, and other metabolic conditions. Because oil is such a concentrated source of fat, when oil is used regularly it becomes very difficult to follow a truly low-fat, whole food plant-based way of eating—which is the approach shown to help prevent or even reverse many chronic diseases¹.

Multiple studies have demonstrated that low-fat diets, especially those rich in whole plant foods, contribute to improved insulin sensitivity, reduced inflammation, better lipid profiles, and lower risks of cardiovascular disease and metabolic syndrome, supporting their effectiveness in preventing and managing chronic illnesses².



Like learning any new skill, mastering how to cook without oil takes time, patience, and a bit of experimentation. It may feel unfamiliar at first and require some adjustments to recipes and techniques. However, the effort is well worth it. Over time, you'll discover new ways to bring out flavours, create satisfying textures, and prepare meals that are both healthful and delicious. Embracing this process can open up a whole new world of enjoyable, nourishing cooking.

The first step to reducing oil is knowing how much you use

Many of us simply pour oil in without considering how much we're actually using. The first step to cutting back is actually seeing how much oil you put in—grab a tablespoon or measuring cup and take notice. Once you know how much you are using, try cutting it down bit by bit. Half, then a quarter, and keep going from there, whilst implementing the tips in this PDF.

To cook well without oil, it helps to understand what oil actually does in cooking. Oil is primarily used to prevent food from sticking when sautéing, to make dishes crispy, and to prevent foods from drying out when roasting.

The following pages will introduce you to:

- ➔ Dry sautéing
- ➔ Sautéing with water or broth
- ➔ Oven roasting without oil



**Learning to cook
without oil is a
sustainable way to
improve current
and long-term
well-being³**

Dry sautéing

Dry sautéing is a cooking technique where food is cooked in a pan without adding any oil or liquid. It works especially well for foods that naturally release moisture when heated, like mushrooms, but with some practice, you can use it for almost any vegetable. Here's how to do it step-by-step:

Dry sautéing: food is cooked in a pan without adding any oil or liquid

1. Choose the right pan

A non-stick pan works best to prevent sticking. Make sure it's big enough so your food fits in a single layer.

2. Heat the pan

Warm the pan over medium-high heat until it's hot but not smoking.

3. Add your food

Place the food in the pan in a single layer. If you're cooking a lot, do it in batches to avoid overcrowding, which can cause steaming instead of sautéing.

4. Cook the food

Let it cook, without moving it, for a few minutes. The food will start to release its own juices. You can add a little water if needed to prevent sticking and help move the food around, but don't add too much, or it will steam instead of sauté.

5. Stir now and then

Once the bottom begins to brown, stir occasionally to ensure even cooking and prevent burning.

6. Adjust the heat

Turn the heat down if things are browning too fast, or up if they're not browning at all.

7. Check if it's done

Cooking time varies. For example, mushrooms usually take 10 to 15 minutes until they're browned and tender.

8. Season and serve

When cooked to your liking, add herbs, spices, or salt, then serve immediately for the best taste and texture.



Sautéing with water or broth

Replace oil with either water or broth. Great for foods that require a little more moisture when cooking, such as broccoli or cauliflower.

Sautéing with water or broth is another way to reduce oil in your diet

1. Choose the right pan

One that offers enough space to spread your ingredients out evenly.

2. Heat the pan

Warm the pan over medium-high heat until it's warm.

3. Add water or broth

Just enough to cover the bottom of the pan, and wait until it begins to steam or simmer.

4. Cook the food

Place your vegetables or other ingredients in the pan in a single layer, if possible, to promote even cooking. Let the food cook in the liquid; the steam will help cook it and prevent sticking.

5. Stir now and then

Stir occasionally to ensure everything cooks evenly and nothing clings to the pan.

6. Adjust the heat

Turn the heat down if things are browning too fast, or up if they're not browning at all.

7. Check if it's done

Check how well done your ingredients are; most vegetables will soften and brighten in colour when ready.

8. Season and serve

When cooked to your liking, add herbs, spices, or salt, then serve immediately for the best taste and texture.



Oven roasting without oil

Potatoes

This technique allows the natural flavours of your vegetables to shine, while dry rubs add tasty texture and aroma.

Dry rubs add flavour and keep potatoes moist while cooking

1. Prepare

Wash and slice the potatoes. Soak them in water overnight, or for several hours, to remove some starch, which helps make them crispy in the oven.

2. Drain and dry

After soaking, drain the potatoes well and pat them dry with a clean towel. They should be mostly dry but, retain a bit of moisture to achieve a good crispy texture.

3. Make your dry rub

Dry rubs add flavour and help keep potatoes moist while roasting. Examples include:

➤ **Spicy:** 2 tbsp nutritional yeast, 1 tbsp garlic powder, 1 tbsp onion powder, 1 tsp smoked paprika, ½ tsp chipotle powder.

➤ **Savory:** 2 tbsp nutritional yeast, 1 tbsp garlic powder, 1 tbsp onion powder, and 1 tsp each dried rosemary, thyme, and sage.

4. Coat the potatoes

Toss potatoes with your chosen dry rub to evenly cover them.

5. Preheat and prep

Set oven to 220°C and line a baking sheet with parchment paper for easier cleanup.

6. Arrange

Spread potatoes out in a single layer on the sheet, avoiding overcrowding to ensure crispiness.

7. Roast

Roast for 25-30 minutes, checking at 20 minutes. The potatoes should be golden and crispy on the outside, and soft inside.

8. Season and serve

Add a little extra dry rub if desired, and serve immediately for the best texture.



Oven roasting without oil

Other vegetables

1. Prepare

Wash vegetables well.

2. Toss with liquid

Add a small amount of water or vegetable broth to a bowl, then add veggies and toss to coat. Skip this if using a dry rub.

3. Make your dry rub

Dry rubs add flavour and help keep vegetables moist while roasting. Examples include:

➤ **Spicy:** 2 tbsp nutritional yeast, 1 tbsp garlic powder, 1 tbsp onion powder, 1 tsp smoked paprika, ½ tsp chipotle powder.

➤ **Herb:** 1 tbsp each dried basil, oregano, thyme; 1 tsp garlic powder, onion powder; ½ tsp black pepper

4. Coat the vegetables

Toss veggies in dry rub to coat. The natural moisture helps the seasoning stick.

5. Preheat and prep

Set oven to 220°C and line a baking sheet with parchment paper for easier cleanup.

6. Arrange

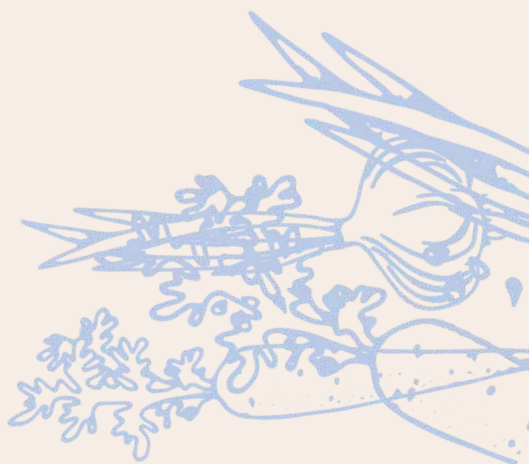
Spread veggies in a single layer, leaving space between pieces for even roasting.

7. Roast

Cook for 15-25 minutes, depending on the vegetable, until tender and golden.

8. Season and serve

Add extra seasoning if you like, then serve immediately.



A final note

By learning to cook without oil, you commit to a sustainable and effective way to reduce excess fat and calories, supporting heart health, improving insulin sensitivity, and helping prevent or even reverse chronic diseases over the long term.

References:

1. Effect of a Low-Fat Vegan Diet on Body Weight, Insulin Sensitivity, Postprandial Metabolism, and Intramyocellular and Hepatocellular Lipid Levels in Overweight Adults

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/27773291>

2. The Role of Plant-Based Nutrition and Exercise in Metabolic Syndrome: A Narrative Review

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12073408/>

3. Plant-based diets and incident metabolic syndrome: Results from a South Korean prospective cohort study

<https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371%2Fjournal.pmed.1003371>

