

Roasting

Written by W.J.Pais

Roasting means exposing the cooking ingredients, such as meat, fish etc, to a strong heat, or fire. It can be done by exposing the ingredient, to an open flame, or in an oven. It can also be placed in a pot, in a little ghee, and cooking it in its own juice. This pot should have a lid in which you will be able to keep "live" coal. It has the same effect of an oven. To start with, you should have a strong flame, and then gradually reduce it to a small flame, always keeping the top coals alive, by fanning them. The result is the outer crust becomes hard, and the inner part gets cooked in its own juice.

Roasting is a cooking method that uses dry heat, whether an open flame, oven, or other heat source. Roasting usually causes caramelization or Maillard browning of the surface of the food, which is considered a flavor enhancement. Meats and most root and bulb vegetables can be roasted. Any piece of meat, especially red meat, that has been cooked in this fashion is called a roast. Additionally, large uncooked cuts of meat are referred to as roasts.[1] Also, meats and vegetables prepared in this way are described as "roasted", e.g., roasted chicken or roasted squash.

For roasting, the food may be placed on a rack, in a roasting pan or, to ensure even application of heat, may be rotated on a spit or rotisserie. During oven roasting, hot air circulates around the meat, cooking all sides evenly. There are several theories for roasting meats correctly: low temperature cooking, high temperature cooking and a combination of both. Each method can be suitable under the appropriate circumstances.

- * A low temperature oven, 95°C to 160°C (200°F to 325°F), is best when cooking with large cuts of meat, turkey and whole chickens. This is not technically roasting temperature, but we call it slow-roasting. The benefit of slow-roasting an item is less moisture loss and a more tender product. At true roasting temperatures, 200°C (400°F) or more, the water inside the muscle is lost at a high rate.

- * Cooking at high temperatures is beneficial if the cut is small enough (filet mignon, strip loin) to be finished cooking before the juices escape.

- * The combination method uses high heat just at either the beginning or the end of the cooking process, with most of the cooking at a low temperature. This method produces the golden brown texture and crust people desire but maintains more of the moisture than simply cooking at a high temperature, although the product will not be as moist as low temperature cooking the whole time. Searing and then turning down to low the piece of meat is also beneficial when a dark crust and caramelized flavor is desired for the finished product.

The objective in any case is to retain as much moisture as possible, while providing the texture and color people prefer. During roasting, meats and vegetables are frequently basted on the surface with butter, lard or oil to reduce the loss of moisture by evaporation. Recently, plastic oven bags have become popular for roasts. These cut cooking times and reduce the loss of moisture during roasting, but reduce flavor development from Maillard browning. They are particularly popular for turkeys.[2]

Until the late 19th century, roasting by dry heat in an oven was called baking. Roasting originally meant turning meat or a bird on a spit in front of a fire. It is one of the oldest forms of cooking known.

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Traditionally recognized roasting methods consist only of baking and cooking over or near an open fire. Grilling is normally not technically a roast, since a grill (gridiron) is used (in English-speaking countries). Smoking differs from roasting because of the lower temperature and controlled smoke application.

Most meat roasts are large cuts of meat, and need to cook for a long time. Many roasts are tied with string prior to roasting, often using the reef knot or, more traditionally, the packer's knot.[3] Tying holds them together during roasting, keeping any stuffing inside, and keeps the roast in a round profile, which promotes even cooking.[4]

Prior to roasting in an oven, meat is generally "browned" by brief exposure to high temperature. This imparts a traditional flavor and color to the roast. Red meats such as beef, lamb, and venison, and certain game birds are often roasted to be "pink" or "rare", meaning that the center of the roast is still red. For reasons of hygiene this practice is not recommended with pork and poultry. Although there is a growing fashion in some restaurants to serve "rose pork", temperature monitoring of the center of the roast is the only sure way to avoid foodborne disease.[5]

In Britain and Ireland, a roast of meat may be referred to as a joint, or a leg, if it is a leg.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roasting>