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INSTITUTE OF
CHILD NUTRITION

CULINARY QUICK BITES

BASIC COOKING TECHNIQUES:
HOW TO BLANCH VEGETABLES



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BASIC COOKING TECHNIQUES: HOW TO BLANCH VEGETABLES

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The University of Mississippi, School of Applied Sciences
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TRAINING OVERVIEW

The Culinary Quick Bites training series is a tool to help child nutrition professionals develop and refine their culinary skills. Each lesson is designed to last approximately fifteen minutes. Each lesson should be facilitated (led) by the person responsible for overseeing food production at a meal site, service area, or at the district level.

Training facilitators should review the training, in its entirety, prior to conducting the training.

This training has been developed to address a variety of learning styles. The training includes an overview of the topic presented by the facilitator, an infographic to reinforce the training topic visually, a video to demonstrate the topic, and an activity to reinforce learning.

Please contact the Institute of Child Nutrition Help Desk at 1-800-321-3054 or helpdesk@theicn.org if you have any questions about how best to facilitate this training.

KEY AREA

Key Area: 2 – Operations

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

FOOD PRODUCTION – 2100

Employee will be able to effectively utilize food preparation principles, production records, kitchen equipment, and food crediting to prepare foods from standardized recipes, including those for special diets.

2130 – Develop culinary skills necessary for school meal preparation.

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

This training counts for 15 minutes of training credit under USDA Professional Standards learning objective 2130 – Develop culinary skills necessary for school meal preparation.

This activity helps reinforce knowledge and skills learned during this lesson. The blanched vegetables prepared during this lesson may be included in the next day's menu production.

Before the training, prepare for the lesson activity and set up the kitchen workstation as described on page 12.

Deliver the lesson/training to participants:

- Read the lesson overview to the participants.
- Discuss the infographic and how it relates to the training topic.
- View the instruction video with participants.
- Answer any questions participants may have on the lesson, infographic, and video.

Complete the activity as instructed on page 12.

MATERIALS NEEDED



- Anti-slip mat – 1 per person
- Cutting board – 1 per person
- Chef knife – 1 per person
- Waste pan – as needed
- Food pan – as needed
- Vegetables (type and amount based on your service needs)
- Water
- Perforated pans (amount based on your service needs)
- Sheet trays
- Equipment: Steamer and freezer
- Infographic: How to Blanch Vegetables – 1 per person
- Access to a screen to show the training video. Possible options include:
 - Site computer monitor with sound
 - Projector with sound
 - Tablets and smartphones
 - A QR code has been provided for quick access to the video on handheld devices.

LESSON OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVE:

At the end of this lesson, participants will be able to demonstrate how to blanch vegetables.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT BLANCHING VEGETABLES

- Blanching and shocking (also known as par-cooking) refers to partially cooking an item (blanching), then rapidly cooling it (shocking), to retain the desired color and texture.
- Blanching is recommended for dense, hearty vegetables such as broccoli, carrots, Brussels sprouts, etc.
- To blanch vegetables for school meal programs, steam the vegetables for 2–5 minutes (standardize to the equipment at the site), just until the vegetables begin to brighten in color, and then immediately cool them to stop the cooking process.
- For school kitchens, you can blanch and shock multiple pans of food using a speed rack and a walk-in freezer (or blast chiller, if available).
 - Steam the pans of vegetables for 2–5 minutes (standardize to the equipment at your site)
 - Place on sheet pans on a speed rack and allow to cool for 10–15 minutes (standardize to the site).
 - Do not allow product to freeze (unless you want to freeze the item for use at another time).
 - Remove and pan (stage in a pan) for later use.
- Blanching and shocking are great techniques to help with batch cooking. Having products partially cooked will help expedite cooking times during production.
 - Certain blanched and shocked items can be served as is without further cooking, such as broccoli on the salad bar.
 - Others will require additional cooking time.
- Blanching is a great technique for improving visual appeal. For example, vibrant-colored broccoli is more appealing to students compared to a dull, gray color, indicating the broccoli was overcooked, and that can increase consumption.
- Be sure to follow safe food handling practices. Properly hot-hold cooked items for service or cool the food items, per your HACCP plan.

LESSON OVERVIEW

HOW TO BLANCH VEGETABLES

- Utilizing the infographic, review the process for blanching vegetables.
- Review the embedded training video.

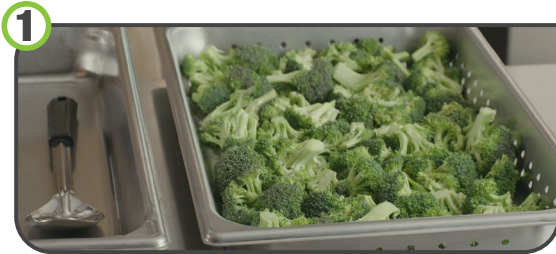
After we review the infographic and video, there will be an activity to reinforce skills learned.

Culinary Quick Bites

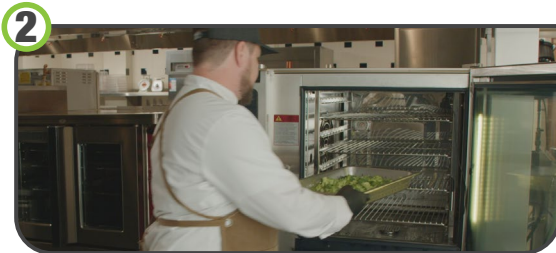
BASIC FOOD PREPARATION SKILLS

HOW TO BLANCH VEGETABLES

Blanching and shocking are common techniques used in commercial kitchens to prepare vegetables for cooking, freezing, or storage. Blanching involves briefly boiling or steaming vegetables, while shocking involves rapidly cooling them in ice water.



Prepare the vegetables: wash and trim the vegetables as needed, and cut them into uniform sizes to ensure even cooking.



Blanch the vegetables: place the vegetables in a steamer and cook the vegetables for a few minutes until they are crisp-tender (the exact time will depend on the type of vegetable and its size).



Blanching can make the color of vegetables brighter and more intense, making them look more appealing.



Shock the vegetables: place the product in a freezer or blast chiller to stop the cooking process and completely cool.



Re-pan the product for use in a recipe or on a salad bar.



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How to Blanch Vegetables

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

<https://vimeo.com/879568917/0402741b9d?share=copy>

QR CODE

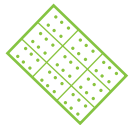
Utilize the QR code embedded to the right to share the video with staff utilizing handheld devices such as smartphones and tablets. Use the photo app on the smart device to scan the code to be directed to the video.



ACTIVITY

SETUP

MATERIALS:



Anti-slip mat
– 1 per person



Food pan
– as needed



Sheet trays



Cutting board
– 1 per person



Vegetables (type and
amount based on your
service needs)



Equipment: Steamer
and freezer



Chef knife
– 1 per person



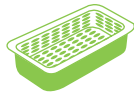
Water



Infographic: How to
Blanch Vegetables
– 1 per person



Waste pan
– as needed



Perforated pans
(amount based on your
service needs)

NOTE: Participants will be working together to blanch the vegetables. Determine the quantity to prepare based on the number of servings needed for your service.

SETUP INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACILITATOR

- 1** Prior to the training, gather all of the materials needed for the activity. Pre-wash the ingredients that will be used for the training. Set up a workstation for each participant with the utensils and ingredients needed to prepare the recipe.
- 2** During the activity, remember to monitor and observe staff as they practice their culinary skills.

ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- 1** Refer the participants to the infographic. Then read the instructions for the activity. Ask the participants if there are any questions before beginning the activity.
- 2** Instruct all participants to wash their hands and put on single-use gloves before starting.
- 3** As a group, the participants will blanch vegetables to incorporate into their weekly menu. Complete the cooking process and encourage the participants to taste the final product.
 - Instruct participants to take their time and practice their culinary skills.
 - Discard waste.

POST ACTIVITY

- After completing the hands-on activity, recap the lesson with the participants. Offer an opportunity for participants to share their learning experience during the training and highlight any tips or takeaways they want to share with the group.
- If time allows, facilitate a discussion with the participants. Suggested discussion topics include:
 - Ask participants to discuss recipes that would benefit from blanching vegetables.
 - Ask participants to describe how blanching vegetables can assist in improving their meal quality.
- Ask if the participants feel more comfortable with blanching vegetables or want more time to develop the skill further if time allows.
- Plan the next training session based on the needs of your staff.



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