

Glossary of Baking Terms

The language of baking clarifies what techniques and methods are needed for each recipe. Once you learn this language, you're on your way to mastering any recipe.

Bake To cook in an oven with dry heat. The oven should always be heated for 10 to 15 minutes before baking.

Batter A mixture of flour, liquid, and other ingredients that is thin enough to pour.

Beat To thoroughly combine ingredients and incorporate air with a rapid, circular motion. This may be done with a wooden spoon, wire whisk, rotary eggbeater, electric mixer, or food processor.

Blanch To partially cook food by plunging it into boiling water for a brief period, then into cold water to stop the cooking process.

Boil To heat a liquid until bubbles rise continually to the surface and break.

Caramelize To heat sugar until it is melted and brown. Caramelizing sugar gives it a distinctive flavor.

Chop To cut into small pieces using a sharp knife, appliance, or scissors.

Coats spoon When a thin, even film covers a metal spoon after it has been dipped into a cooked mixture and allowed to drain.

Combine To stir together two or more ingredients until mixed.

Cool To come to room temperature.

Cream To beat one or more ingredients, usually margarine or butter, sugar, and/or eggs, until the mixture is smooth and fluffy.

Crimp To seal the edges of two layers of dough with the tines of a fork or your fingertips.

To distribute solid fat throughout the dry ingredients using a pastry blender, fork, or two knives in a scissors motion.

cut in A measurement less than 1/8 teaspoon.

Dough A soft, thick mixture of flour, liquids, fat, and other ingredients.

dough To distribute small amounts of margarine or butter evenly over the surface of pie filling or dough.

Drizzle To drip a glaze or icing over food from the tines of a fork or the end of a spoon.

Drizzle

Dust

To sprinkle lightly with sugar, flour, or cocoa.

Flute

To make or press a decorative pattern into the raised edge of pastry.

Fold in

To gently combine a heavier mixture with a more delicate substance, such as beaten egg whites or whipped cream, without causing a loss of air.

Glaze

To coat with a liquid, thin icing, or jelly before or after the food is cooked.

Grate

To shred with a handheld grater or food processor.

Grease

To rub fat on the surface of a pan or dish to prevent sticking.

Grind

To produce small particles of food by forcing food through a grinder.

Knead

To fold, push and turn dough or other mixture to produce a smooth, elastic texture.

A temperature of about 105°F, which feels neither hot nor cold.

Lukewarm

To stir together two or more ingredients until they are thoroughly combined.

Mix

To combine dry ingredients with liquid ingredients until the dry ingredients are thoroughly moistened but the mixture is still slightly lumpy.

mix until moistened

To refrigerate a gelatin mixture until it thickens to the consistency of unbeaten egg whites.

Partially Set

To remove the skin of a fruit or vegetable by hand or with a knife or peeler. This also refers to the skin or outer covering of a fruit or vegetable.

Peel

To allow yeast dough to rise before baking. Or to dissolve yeast in a warm liquid and set it in a warm place for 5 to 10 minutes until it expands and becomes bubbly.

Proof

To chill in the refrigerator until a mixture is cool or until dough is firm.

Refrigerate

The skin or outer coating of such foods as citrus fruit or cheese.

Roll

To cook a mixture until the surface billows rather than bubbles.

Rolling Boil

When dough is slightly mounded, not level.

To heat a mixture or liquid to just below the boiling point.

Rolling Boil / Simmer

To cut slits in food with a knife, cutting partway through the outer surface.

Score

Margarine, butter, ice cream, or cream cheese that is in a state soft enough for easy blending, but not melted.

softened.

To cut food into narrow strips using a sharp knife, grater, or food processor fitted with a shredding disk.

Shred.

Egg whites or whipping cream beaten to the stage where the mixture forms soft, rounded peaks when the beaters are removed.

soft peaks

To cook food on a rack or in a wire basket over boiling water.

Steam

Egg whites beaten to the stage where the mixture will hold stiff, pointed peaks when the beaters are removed.

stiff peak

To combine ingredients with a spoon or whisk using a circular motion.

Stir

To mix lightly with a lifting motion, using two forks or spoons.

Toss

To beat rapidly with a wire whisk or electric mixer to incorporate air into a mixture in order to lighten and increase the volume of the mixture.

Whip

The colored outer peel of citrus fruit, which is used to add flavor. The zest is often referred to as "grated peel" in recipes. To create zest, choose the diagonal-hole side of a box grater (it will zest more cleanly than if you use the nail-hole side) and rub lightly to avoid getting the white pith, which is bitter. For broader strips of zest, use a swivel-blade peeler or a sharp knife to cut away the peel.

Zest

