Looking for flavor with less fat and calories? The best cooks know the secrets for preparing great tasting food that's good for you. They know how to make it healthy and delicious. They've learned ways to prepare flavorful healthy food and so can you. They bake, steam, toss, grill, simmer, top and stir-fry their way to flavor and health. Tasty, healthy food starts with the right ingredients, but the way you cook it can make all the difference.

Lock in Flavor and Nutrients

Cooking methods such as grilling and baking help add flavor and lock in nutrition. When you use these methods to cook meats, the high temperatures seal in juices. Little or no fat needs to be added, keeping extra calories at bay.

Steaming has been traditionally used for vegetables and fish. Many people shy away from steamed vegetables if they've tasted over cooked or mushy steamed foods. The key to steaming is timing so that vegetables do not overcook and remain crisp, tasty and nutritious.

Cooking time is important with stir-frying too. Stir-fried foods cook quickly and retain their vitamins and minerals. The secret to a stir-fry with great texture and flavor is a hot enough pan with small amounts of healthy oils so that veggies and meats cook quickly.

Simmering is slow cooking food in liquid. By simmering at a temperature just under the boiling point, meat or beans become tender, juicy and tasty. Very little fat is needed when cooking simmered foods.

Lower the Calories

Baking, grilling, steaming, stir frying and simmering are all great cooking methods for adding flavor with less fat and calories. To make your foods healthy and delicious at home, remember to use less butter, margarine and oil and follow the cooking times and temperatures for all your recipes.

Baked
For flavor with less fat, bake or oven roast a variety of foods in an uncovered pan instead of frying.

Steamed
Enjoy the crunch of tasty, nutritious vegetables, lightly steamed to perfection, topped with your favorite herbs.

Tossed
The combinations of ingredients that can be tossed into a healthy salad are endless. Start with your favorite leafy greens. From spinach or arugula, to iceberg and romaine, make any healthy salad come alive with taste by tossing in your favorite lean proteins or beans.

Grilled
Enjoy the great outdoors into the fall; keep the grill fired-up to seal in the flavor and lose some fat. Grilled veggies lead the way followed by lean cuts of meat, chicken and fish.

Stir Fried
Make veggies a main dish; grab a hold of some healthy oils and fresh herbs, then stir in the flavor and nutrition.

Topped
Let your imagination run wild, top every dish off with taste. Herbs, veggies, fruit or a little grated cheese are most frequently used as toppings for sweet and savory dishes alike.

Simmered
As the weather gets cooler, healthy ingredients in home made soup can simmer to taste perfection. Add hearty flavor and nutrition with all kinds of beans and whole grains like black-eyed peas, lentils and barley.
Healthy Kitchen Basics

You don't need to be a gourmet chef, own every kitchen gadget or plant your own fresh herb garden to prepare the tastiest, good-for-you meals. With the right ingredients, a few pieces of basic equipment and a little time, you too can capture the flavors of health.

Grilling & Baking
Grilling and baking are basic cooking methods that use dry heat. Any working grill or oven would do. For both cooking techniques, temperature is the key. Proper temperatures are needed to create a delicious brown crust and seal in juices. When grilling or baking meat, fish or poultry, it’s always a good idea to check internal temperature with a food thermometer to make sure that the recommended safe temperature is reached.

Steaming & Simmering
Steaming and simmering both cook foods with moist heat. For best results with steaming, all you need is a rack, basket or perforated pan. World cuisines from Chinese, to French to American employ steaming as a preferred cooking method to lock in taste and nutrition. For best results with steaming, make sure that the food is at least one inch above the water and cooking times are brief. Simmering is a widely used cooking method that produces moist, tender, evenly cooked, flavorful foods. It is an excellent choice for soups, stocks and beans, but can also be used for meats. No special cooking equipment is necessary, a stock pot or saucepan is all you need.

Stir-Frying
A sauté pan, high heat, a little healthy oil and two large spoons or spatulas are all you need for a well prepared stir fry. For best results, cut veggies into bite-sized pieces; cut meats into thin strips, add your favorite herbs or sauce and toss the ingredients while they cook.

Basic equipment that you probably already own – combined with the right ingredients – can help you make it healthy and make it delicious.

Since everyone’s health history and nutritional needs are so different, please make sure that you talk with your doctor and a registered dietitian to get advice about the diet and exercise plan that’s right for you.