

Chop Test: A New Way to Prepare Vegetables

There's a new approach in town, and this one will offer all the tools you need in order to prepare vegetables in healthful and tasty ways. It's called the **chop test**.













If a vegetable is physically **hard to chop**, then that vegetable will take longer to cook. Cook it until it is tender, and don't worry too much about overcooking. Stick a knife or fork into the vegetable. When that vegetable yields easily to such prodding, then it's done.

If a vegetable is **easy to slice**, then it will cook much more quickly. Cook gently until just crisp-tender, paying careful attention to doneness. These vegetables are more finicky than the hard to chop options -- overcooking will make them mushy and less palatable.

Some vegetables **should not be cooked** because they are easy to slice and very high in water content. This is more of a cooking lesson than the rest, because ease of chopping is not a factor. These vegetables include avocado, cucumbers, lettuce, radishes, and sprouts.

There are a few **exceptions**, just as there are with any rule. For example, some greens are an exception because they are easy to cut but need longer cooking to make them tender and palatable. Then there are tomatoes, which mellow over time if you are making a sauce.

By Judy Doherty, PC II and Founder of Food and Health Communications, Inc.

	Easy to Slice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook quickly • Do not overcook 	Hard to Chop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook until tender • Don't worry about overcooking 	Don't Cook <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't cook these vegetables • Ease of chopping is not a factor • These are the exceptions
	What are some easy-to-slice vegetables? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arugula • Broccoli • Broccoli Rabe • Cabbage • Cauliflower • Cherry Tomatoes • Eggplant • Fennel • Garlic • Green Beans • Onions • Peas • Peppers • Snow Peas • Spinach • Sugar Snap Peas • Summer Squash • Tomatoes 	What are some hard-to-chop vegetables? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artichokes • Beets • Carrots • Potatoes • Pumpkin • Rhubarb • Rutabagas • Sweet Potatoes • Turnips • Winter Squash 	What vegetables should not be cooked ? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avocado • Cucumbers • Lettuce • Radishes • Sprouts 
	Best Approaches to Cooking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a grill  • In a steamer basket  • On the stovetop  • In the microwave  	Best Approaches to Cooking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roasting in the oven • In a pressure cooker • In the microwave. 	Best Approaches to Preparation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tossed with vinegar and a dash of olive oil as a salad  • Shaved thinly and served carpaccio-style  • Sliced into wedges and served with dip 

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