

## Healthy Cooking Means you can Ditch the Diet

Hands up everyone who made a New Year's resolution to lose a few Christmas kilos or adopt healthier eating habits this year? Great. Now, wouldn't you like to be able to achieve it without using the "d" word? Healthy eating doesn't have to be boring eating and it doesn't have to mean "dieting".

The first step in your healthy eating plan should be to look at how you are preparing your meals. Frying everything in inch-deep oil is obviously a big no-no, as is cooking with cream and butter. It's a shame, I know, but don't worry - there are plenty of healthy cooking methods that will still have you salivating.

Stir-frying is a healthy option that also tastes great. You can use fresh herbs like basil and coriander and sauces like soy, oyster and sweet chilli to add flavour without adding too many calories. This is a quick and easy way to prepare food, too, so it's perfect for weeknight meals. In terms of equipment, all you need is a good non-stick wok and a tool to toss the food around for even cooking. Serve with rice or, for an even easier option, you can add noodles straight to the wok.

Most woks come with a steaming rack, so why not use it? Steaming is one of the healthiest cooking options around. Fish fillets scattered with fresh herbs and wrapped in banana leaves make an impressive dinner party dish for your health-conscious friends (and even for those who aren't watching their waistlines). Or try a whole steamed fish for maximum impact.

Grilling is another tasty yet healthy way to cook. A non-stick grill pan with a drainage channel around the perimeter will make attractive grill marks on your food while allowing excess fat to drain away. It's a great way to cook steaks, chicken breast, fish and kebabs. Just apply a little olive oil spray to the food to prevent it drying out.

Got a sweet craving? At this time of year there is an abundance of delicious fruit available that should keep you satisfied, including mangoes, peaches, plums and nectarines. It's fantastic straight from the fruit bowl or chopped up in a fruit salad, but for an occasional treat, serve with a scoop of low-fat ice-cream.

It's also worth looking at your existing [cookware](#). Do your pans have an effective non-stick coating? If so, you will need only a small amount of oil to add flavour and moisture to your food, resulting in much healthier cooking. If the non-stick coating is non-existent or has lost its effectiveness, chances are you are adding too much oil to your food. It may be time to invest in some good-quality non-stick cookware. While it may cost a little more than the cookware you can pick up at the supermarket, think of it as an investment in your health.

## About the Author

If you need a new wok, grill pan or other non-stick [kitchen utensils](#) and [cookware](#), visit [www.chefstoolbox.com.au](http://www.chefstoolbox.com.au).

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