

The Best Way to Cook Vegetables

Vegetables--from artichokes to zucchini--are relatively low-calorie super foods that can significantly lower your risk for cancer, heart disease and other diseases. But how you cook your veggies can help boost their antioxidant powers or turn them into an ineffective and tasteless mush.

Led by Dr. A. M. Jimenez-Monreal, Spanish researchers from the University of Murcia and the University of Complutense have determined that microwaving and griddling vegetables are generally the best way to cook them, while boiling and pressure-cooking tend to be the worst, reports Science Daily. (Griddling is cooking on a flat metal surface with no oil.) "In short, water is not the cook's best friend when it comes to preparing vegetables," advised Jimenez-Monreal.

The team analyzed six cooking methods for 20 different vegetables. Here are the results:

" The vegetables that increased their antioxidant levels after all cooking methods were green beans (except after boiling), celery and carrots.

" The antioxidant levels of asparagus were increased after boiling, while eggplant rose after frying.

" The highest antioxidant loss was observed in cauliflower after boiling and microwaving, peas after boiling and zucchini after boiling and frying.

" Green beans, beets and garlic were found to keep their antioxidant levels after most cooking treatments.

" Don't microwave corn! It lost about 35 percent of its antioxidant capacity after microwaving.

"**Artichoke** was the only vegetable that kept its high antioxidant level during all the cooking methods.

The study findings were published in the Journal of Food Science.

Best way to cook vegetables 060608