


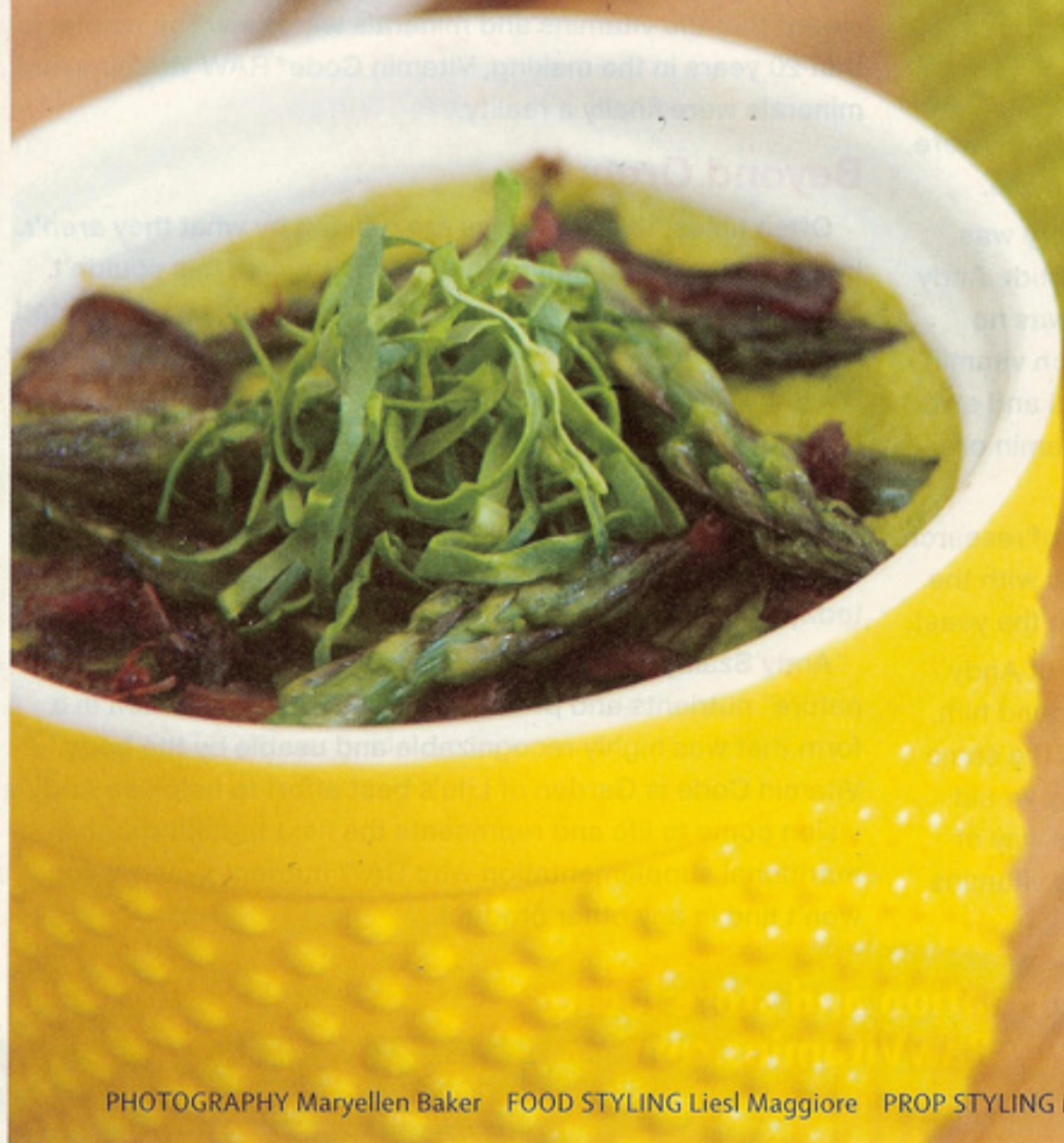
BY Viviane Bauquet Farre

chop, chop!

Learn how to slice, dice, mince, and chiffonade like a pro

 ASPARAGUS AND OYSTER MUSHROOM GRATINS WITH SPINACH CHIFFONADE, p. 42

Professional chefs have no problem chopping veggies. But for home cooks, it can be another story. Does slicing have to be such a wrist-breaking chore? How finely should you mince basil? And what does "chiffonade" mean? The following pages tell you how to wield a knife with confidence—and precision.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

For happy chopping every time, keep these tools at the ready:

Sharp 8- or 10-inch chef's knife

The large blade allows smooth, regular movement, which results in clean cuts.

Large nonslip cutting board Perfect cutting requires a comfortable amount of room.

Bowl to transfer food to Clear the cutting board as you go to leave plenty of room for foods to be cut.

PHOTOGRAPHY Maryellen Baker FOOD STYLING Liesl Maggiore PROP STYLING Michelle Weaver

PIN DOT RAMEKINS, FROM CRATEANDBARREL.COM

technique

ESSENTIAL SKILL NO. 1: The Nice Slice



All chopping starts with slicing. Here's how to do it right:

1. Grip the knife handle with four fingers. Rest your thumb on top of the knife's bolster or spine.
2. Hold food with your other hand, knuckles bent and thumb tucked away. Use the knuckle nearest the nail of your middle finger as a guide—the blade of the knife will rest against it as you slice. This prevents nicks and cuts.
3. With the tip of the knife resting on the cutting board and the handle raised, move the knife down in a rocking motion to cleanly slice food. Repeat, moving the food (not the knife) as you slice.

Sliced Artichoke and Baby Arugula Salad

SERVES 8 | 30 MINUTES OR FEWER

Keep a jar or two of marinated artichoke hearts on hand in your cupboard and you can make this simple yet elegant salad at a moment's notice. Artichoke

hearts are chewy and fibrous, so a sharp knife is necessary for clean slices.


VINAIGRETTE

- 3 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 Tbs. aged balsamic vinegar
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (2 tsp.)

SALAD

- 8 cups baby arugula leaves
- 8 oil-packed artichoke hearts, drained, patted dry, and cut in $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slices
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sliced pitted kalamata olives, optional
- 2 cups grape tomatoes, halved
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shaved Parmesan, optional
- 4 Tbs. chopped fresh chives

1. To make Vinaigrette: Whisk together oil, vinegar, and garlic in small bowl. Season with salt and pepper, if desired.
2. To make Salad: Toss together arugula, artichoke hearts, olives (if using), and Vinaigrette. Top with tomatoes, Parmesan (if using), and chives. Season with freshly ground black pepper to taste.

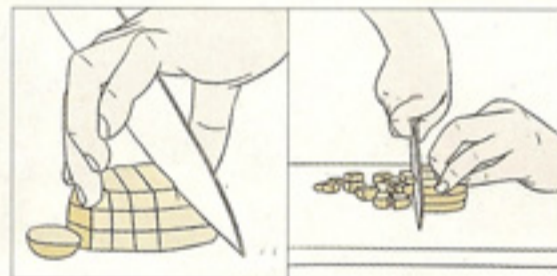
PER 1-CUP SERVING: 100 CAL; 3 G PROT; 9 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 9 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 168 MG SOD; 4 G FIBER; 2 G SUGARS 

Spring Vegetable
Minestrone, p. 42



ESSENTIAL SKILL NO. 2:

The Perfect Dice



No vegetable is perfectly square in its natural state, which can make cutting it into even cubes seem next to impossible. The solution? Create flat slices first (so food can't slip or roll), then cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick strips, and dice. Here's how with a potato:

1. Cut potato lengthwise into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick slices.
2. Stack 2 or 3 slices on cutting board, and cut lengthwise into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch sticks.
3. Slice sticks crosswise into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch dice. Transfer to bowl, and repeat as necessary.

technique



Spring Vegetable Minestrone

SERVES 8

The secret to success when making this light soup is to be sure all the vegetables are diced to the same size so they cook evenly. Feel free to substitute or add other fresh veggies, such as zucchini, celery, and corn.

- 3 Tbs. olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 2 large shallots, finely diced
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dry white wine
- 3 large cloves garlic, minced (1 Tbs.)
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. cayenne pepper
- 3 medium carrots, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch dice (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups)
- 1 large Yukon gold potato, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch dice (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups)
- 2 medium young turnips, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch dice (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups)
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 12 Italian parsley sprigs
- 8 fresh thyme sprigs
- 2 bay leaves
- 10 oz. fresh or frozen shelled peas (2 cups)
- 4 oz. snow peas, stems trimmed and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-wide slices (1 cup)
- 3 cups lightly packed spinach leaves (2 oz.)
- 2 Tbs. minced fresh tarragon, for garnish

1. Heat oil in saucepan over medium-high heat. Add shallots, and sauté 2 minutes, or until shallots begin to soften. Add wine, garlic, and cayenne. Simmer 4 minutes.
2. Add carrots, potato, and turnips, and sauté 1 minute. Add broth and 5 cups water. Tie together parsley sprigs, thyme sprigs, and bay leaves with kitchen twine, and add to soup. Season with salt and pepper, if desired. Cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer 20 minutes.
3. Stir in peas, snow peas, and spinach. Cover, and simmer 5 minutes more. Remove herb bundle, and discard. Season with salt and pepper, if desired. Ladle soup into bowls, sprinkle with tarragon, drizzle with olive oil, and serve.

PER $1\frac{1}{2}$ -CUP SERVING: 182 CAL; 4 G PROT; 11 G TOTAL FAT (2 G SAT FAT); 19 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 94 MG SOD; 4 G FIBER; 7 G SUGARS  


Asparagus and Oyster Mushroom Gratins with Spinach Chiffonade

SERVES 8

Thin ribbons of fresh spinach add color and crunch to this hearty main dish.

- 2 lb. asparagus, trimmed
- 2 Tbs. olive oil, divided, plus more for brushing ramekins
- 4 oz. oyster mushrooms, torn into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces (1 cup)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup low-fat milk
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated Gruyère or Swiss cheese
- 8 large spinach leaves
- 2 tsp. lemon-infused oil for garnish, optional

1. Preheat oven to 500°F, and place oven rack in top position. Toss asparagus with 1 Tbs. olive oil on baking sheet, and season with salt and pepper, if desired. Roast 9 minutes, or until tips begin to brown but stems are still green. Cool.
2. Heat remaining 1 Tbs. olive oil in skillet over high heat. Spread mushrooms evenly across skillet surface. Cook undisturbed 2 minutes, until mushrooms begin to brown. Toss, and spread evenly across skillet surface. Repeat 2 or 3 times until mushrooms are golden brown. Transfer to bowl.
3. Cut off asparagus tips; reserve. Place stalks in bowl of food processor. Add milk, and process 1 minute or until puréed. Transfer to bowl. Whisk in eggs and cheese, and season with salt and pepper, if desired.
4. Preheat oven to 375°F. Brush 8 4-oz. ramekins with oil. Fill prepared ramekins with egg mixture. Top with mushrooms and reserved asparagus tips. Bake 25 to 30 minutes, or until golden brown on top. Cool 5 minutes.
5. Stack 4 spinach leaves, and roll stack lengthwise into tight cylinder. Cut cylinder crosswise in fine slices. Repeat with remaining spinach leaves. Top each gratin with spinach chiffonade. Drizzle with lemon oil, if using.

PER GRATIN: 127 CAL; 7 G PROT; 10 G TOTAL FAT (3 G SAT FAT); 4 G CARB; 65 MG CHOL; 72 MG SOD; 2 G FIBER; 1 G SUGARS 



ESSENTIAL SKILL NO. 3:

Rollin' Chiffonade



Chiffonade is a way of slicing that turns leafy herbs and greens into fine, light-as-chiffon ribbons.

1. Stack 3 to 4 leaves flat on cutting board.
2. Roll leaves lengthwise into a tight cylinder.
3. Slice cylinder crosswise (using slicing technique) into fine ($\frac{1}{16}$ - to $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch) ribbons.

ESSENTIAL SKILL NO. 4: The Superfine Mince



No matter how proficient you are with a knife, simple slicing just won't suffice when you want to transform herbs, ginger, or garlic into fine bits. Here's how to finely mince a bunch of fresh herbs:

1. Make sure herbs are dry before you start. (Moist herbs tend to bruise and stick to the knife.) Place leaves in mound, and use slicing technique to coarsely chop.
2. Place knife in front of chopped herbs, with blade in contact with board. Rest your free hand flat on top of tip-end of the knife.
3. Without lifting knife tip off cutting board, rapidly move knife handle up and down, going back and forth over herbs until minced to desired fineness.

WEB EXTRA See chef Viviane Bauquet Farre's knife skills in action: visit vegetariantimes.com/chopchop for a helpful how-to video.

Sautéed New Potatoes en Persillade

SERVES 8 | 30 MINUTES OR FEWER

A *persillade* is a mixture of minced parsley and garlic that's often used to flavor simple Provençal dishes. Try stirring a persillade into the Spring Vegetable Minestrone (p. 42) instead of tarragon.

- 1 cup parsley leaves, coarsely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
- 2 lb. new potatoes (6 cups)
- 3 Tbs. olive oil

1. Combine parsley and garlic in mound on cutting board; mince until pieces are size of sesame seeds. Set aside.
2. Cook potatoes in boiling, salted water 8 to 10 minutes or until tender. Drain, and cool 10 minutes.
3. Cut potatoes into ½-inch-thick slices. Heat oil in large skillet over high heat. Add potatoes, and cook 2 minutes, or until beginning to brown. Stir, and cook potatoes 5 minutes more, or until golden brown on all sides, tossing 2 or 3 times. Season with salt and pepper, if desired. Add persillade, and sauté 30 seconds, or until fragrant, making sure not to let garlic brown.

PER ½-CUP SERVING: 141 CAL; 3 G PROT; 5 G TOTAL FAT
(<1 G SAT FAT); 21 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 82 MG SOD;
2 G FIBER; <1 G SUGARS **V** **GF**

contributors



Kate Jacoby and Rich Landau Recipe Developers, "Spring Fling," p. 66

What did you discover while on this assignment?

Rich: I reconnected with "home-friendly" recipes. Restaurant recipes are very precise, sometimes complicated, and use equipment that home cooks don't have.

What's your favorite piece of cookware?

Kate: A flexible spatula.

Rich: A 12-inch stainless steel sauté pan.

What was your most memorable dining experience?

Kate: When we saw the sign "Rasta Ital vegetarian" at a roadside shack in Antigua, we slammed on the brakes. The food was in giant clay crocks, and we asked for a little of everything. We still remember those haunting aromatic flavors!

Write your memoir in six words:

Rich: I wondered if it was possible.

Kate: Raised the bar for vegan restaurants.



Viviane Bauquet Farre Writer, Recipe Developer, "Chop, Chop," p. 38

Who or what inspires you most?

When I meander around my farmers' market and see baskets full of just-picked veggies and fruits, I dream of recipes. Fruits and veggies are my inspiration. I simply cannot imagine a more versatile and delicious palette to work with. My only role, as I see it, is to honor their essence to the fullest.

What's your most treasured family recipe?

Funnily enough, I don't make any of my childhood recipes. But I do have very fond memories of making tropical fruit jams with my grandmother.

What's your favorite grocery splurge?

Truffles! (And I don't mean the chocolate kind.)

What's your favorite piece of cookware?

The nonstick Scanpan. I've never cooked with a better pan.



Kim Wong Prop Stylist, "DIY Dim Sum," p. 72

Who or what inspires you most?

My dad. He's an artist, and though he's well into his 90s, he still manages to be creative and enjoy the simple things in life.

What's your favorite grocery splurge?

Expensive but delicious olive oil.

Are you a flinger or a measurer?

I start out as a measurer, but sometimes my imagination gets the best of me and I become a flinger. Sometimes with *not* the best results!

What's your No. 1 pantry staple?

Dried shiitake mushrooms and a mix of three different brown rices. 🍄