The Best Roasted Vegetables

Making roasted vegetables is as easy as putting them in the oven, but making the best roasted vegetables—soft and tender, browned and caramelized, full of intensified flavor—involves a few tricks. Make roasted vegetables as delicious as possible by following the ten tips below.

1. **Preheat the Oven**
   This is an important step. You want the oven nice and hot when you go to put the vegetables in. A less-than-hot oven will turn out less-than-browned vegetables. The exact temperature doesn't matter too much. Set the oven to 375°F, but anything in the 350°F to 450°F range is acceptable.

2. **Cut Vegetables Into Even Pieces**
   Smaller vegetables can be roasted whole... as long as they are of even sizes. You want even pieces so the vegetables cook at an even rate. In general, vegetables need to be trimmed and cut – larger pieces will make a more dramatic presentation whereas smaller, bite-size pieces are easier to eat.

3. **Toss Vegetables With Oil**
   Either in the roasting pan or a large bowl, toss vegetables with a tablespoon or two of olive oil or the oil of your choice. Oil helps the vegetables brown, so don't skip this step. Drizzle vegetables with the oil, then toss them to coat them as evenly as possible. You can add coarsely chopped garlic, slices of chilies or pepper flakes, or other seasonings at this point, too.

4. **Don't Crowd the Vegetables**
   You want plenty of hot air to be around the vegetables. The less the vegetables touch each other, the more area on them will brown.

5. **Sprinkle Vegetables With Salt**
   The reason roasted vegetables at restaurants always taste so great? They are seasoned in layers. A bit of salt at the beginning, and another small dose of salt when they’re done. Give the vegetables a sprinkle of salt before you pop them in the oven. You can give a final, finishing sprinkle of salt at the end, so just add a little bit.
6. Roast Vegetables At the Top

Roasting the vegetables in the top third of the oven will help the vegetables brown the best.

7. Shake or Turn Vegetables

When the vegetables start to brown, give the pan a good shake or use a spatula to turn the vegetables to move them around a bit to brown evenly.

8. Roast Vegetables Thoroughly

You want roasted vegetables to be two things: brown and tender. Keep the vegetables in a hot oven until they are both. If they start to get too dark, cover them with foil until tender, then cook for a final 5 minutes or so with the foil off. If they aren't browning, raise the heat in the oven and move the pan to the top of the oven.

9. "Finish" the Vegetables

Roasted vegetables are best with a final drizzle of good quality olive oil and a little sprinkle of salt. Other final hits of flavor can include:

- Freshly ground black pepper
- Fresh lemon juice
- Minced herbs (mint, parsley, thyme, or just a wee bit of rosemary are great choices)
- Balsamic vinegar

10. Serve Vegetables Warm or Let Them Cool

Roasted vegetables are great while still warm, obviously, but can also be served at room temperature to great effect. If you want to serve room temperature roasted vegetables, however, be sure to let them cool in a single layer, uncovered or very loosely covered, so the vegetables don't start to steam each other and get soggy or sad.

Adapted from How to Cook Without a Book by Pam Anderson.
Honey Roasted Sweet Potatoes

**Ingredients**
- 2 pounds red-skinned sweet potatoes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

**Directions**
Preheat oven to 350°F.

Peel and cut the sweet potatoes into 1-inch pieces and put in a 9 by 13 baking dish. In a small bowl whisk together olive oil, honey and lemon juice. Pour mixture over potatoes and toss to coat. Sprinkle with the salt, and bake, stirring occasionally, for about 1 hour, until potatoes are tender.

Roasted Sweet Potato Fries

**Ingredients**
- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled
- 1/4 cup freshly squeezed orange juice
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil, plus 2 teaspoons Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, or to taste

**Directions**
Preheat the oven to 450°F.

Cut the sweet potatoes into 1/2-inch squared strips (fry shape or julienne strips) and put them into a large bowl.

In a small saucepan, combine the orange juice, 1 tablespoon of oil, salt and pepper, to taste, the ground ginger and cayenne pepper. Simmer for 2 to 3 minutes, whisking until reduced to a thick consistency. Remove from the heat, pour over the sweet potatoes and toss to coat.

Rub 2 teaspoons of remaining vegetable oil on a rimmed nonstick baking sheet or use parchment paper or a silicone liner and omit oil. Arrange the sweet potato strips on the prepared baking sheet and bake until brown, about 25 minutes, turning after about 10 to 12 minutes. Remove the baking sheet from the oven and transfer the potatoes to a serving dish. Eat and enjoy!

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