TECHNIQUE: OVEN ROASTING OVERVIEW

Chef Thomas Keller / Chapter Six

MASTERCLASS

TECHNIQUE: OVEN ROASTING OVERVIEW

"Tempering is critical to any food, especially oven roasting."

CHAPTER REVIEW

Tempering food is a simple but critical step that involves bringing an ingredient to room temperature prior to cooking so that it cooks more evenly. Tempering is important with most proteins, but especially when oven roasting large cuts of meat, because it will allow the meat to cook evenly and more efficiently. By tempering, you are ensuring that the meat will have an even temperature gradient from the middle to the edges. A properly tempered piece of meat should be room temperature throughout. In some cases, such as with large cuts of meat, you may need a thermometer to confirm that the inside has been properly tempered. In this chapter, Chef Keller gives an overview of the meats you'll be working with, including three cuts of beef, two cuts of lamb, and a whole chicken. Like all cooking, oven roasting is all about time and temperature, so you also want to confirm that your oven is calibrated. To do so, put an oven thermometer in the oven, turn the oven on, and check that the reading on your thermometer is the same as the reading on the thermometer. If it's not, you might need to get your oven serviced. At the very least, it's worth having this information so you can adjust your cooking accordingly. While important, Chef Keller says, the time and temperature in recipes are merely guidelines. The more experienced and skilled you become in the kitchen, the better equipped you'll be to adjust your approach to get the desired results.

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Is your oven calibrated? It's an important question, and it's not hard to answer. Put an oven thermometer in your oven, turn your oven on, and when it's fully heated, check that the reading on the thermometer is the same as your oven thermometer. If your oven isn't calibrated, call a professional to adjust it, or get an infrared thermometer to measure your actual oven temperature so that you can achieve the correct temperature (even if the oven dial is incorrect).