

Technique: Veggie Ice Plunge

How to blanch and chill vegetables for this delicious salad

Use this method to immediately stop vegetables from cooking—to “kill the cook”--a term Rita learned from a Swiss chef she worked with years ago:

- Fill a large bowl with ice and water and sit it in the sink.
- Bring a pot of water to a boil; the size depends on the quantity of vegetables.
- When the vegetables are cooked to the point you want (1-3 minutes), remove them with a wire strainer and immediately plunge them into the bowl of ice-filled water.
- Let stand several minutes, adding more ice if needed, until vegetables are cold. Drain them well.
- Alternately, you can keep the vegetables in the pan, drain the water, and add ice to the pan. But it will take longer to kill the cook because you are also cooling a very hot pan. The vegetables may not stop cooking as quickly as needed.

Here’s Rita’s method to *kill the cook* when making a chilled vegetable salad:

(recipe follows)

- Microwave the vegetables, covered, in a serving dish or serving bowl with just a tablespoon or two of water.
- While the veggies heat up, put plenty of ice in a colander.
- When cooked as desired, place the dish of veggies in the sink, add the ice and some water to the dish. Let sit 5 minutes or until the vegetables are cold.
- Drain, dress and serve. Or place in the fridge until ready to use.



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Fresh Veggies Italian Style

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Marinated fresh vegetables are a common dish at Italian dinner tables and a delicious way to eat your veggies. Serve with fresh Italian bread to sop up the dressing. Try asparagus or green beans in place of broccoli.

- 2 to 4 cups broccoli florets
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup white wine vinegar* 5% acidity
- 2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley (optional)
- 2 tablespoons chopped basil
- 1 to 2 teaspoons packed brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (or 1 tsp kosher salt)
- 1 small clove garlic, minced

To blanch broccoli in the microwave, use a wide microwave-safe bowl. Add 2-3 tablespoons water to broccoli in bowl. Cover and cook on high 2 to 3 minutes or until broccoli is tender-crisp. Timing depends on quantity of broccoli. Remove cover and immediately add a generous amount of ice to bowl. Add enough water to cover ice and broccoli; set aside to chill.

Combine remaining ingredients; whisk to dissolve sugar and salt. Drain broccoli into a colander; transfer to serving dish. Drizzle with desired amount of dressing and stir to coat broccoli. Use all the dressing for 4 cups florets. Serve with sliced baguette or crusty Italian bread.

* If desired, substitute 3-4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, but do not use sugar.

