

Creative Ways to Prepare Craveable Winter Vegetables

By Laura Rege <https://www.shape.com/healthy-eating/cooking-ideas/how-to-cook-winter-vegetables?>

Winter vegetables are usually an afterthought on your plate. But by employing these ultra-simple cooking hacks, they will be delicious enough to become the star of the meal.



Credit: Westend61/Getty

Rich in vitamins and minerals and packed with earthy goodness, winter's bounty, including beets, squash, and Romanesco, deserves some praise — and a prime role in your meals.

“They’re robust in flavor,” says chef [Eden Grinshpan](#), the author of [Eating Out Loud](#) (Buy It, \$22, [amazon.com](#)) and the host of *Top Chef Canada*. “The right cooking technique and ingredient pairings will give you the perfect balance of textures and taste.” Read on for all her secrets to concocting winter vegetables so delicious, you are bound to give yourself a second helping.

Roast your winter vegetables.

“Heads of cauliflower, broccoli, and [Romanesco](#) are indulgent and beautiful when they’re roasted whole,” says Grinshpan. “They’re fun to serve too. Place the head on the table with a knife, along with toppings, and let everyone dig in.” To cook your whole, veg to perfection, follow these steps:

1. Blanch the head for a few minutes in salted boiling water to ensure that it is tender in the middle.
2. Let it air-dry so the steam rises out and the water dissipates.
3. Douse with extra-virgin olive oil and salt, and roast in a 450°F oven.

If you want to serve your winter vegetables in bite-sized pieces – and make them tender inside and golden outside with a delicious, caramelized flavor – you will need to give them a different roasting treatment. “Doing this transforms [hearty vegetables](#) like squash and broccoli from good to fantastic,” says Grinshpan.

1. Start with a piping-hot oven — set it to at least 425°F.
2. Chop vegetables into uniform pieces so that they cook evenly.
3. Toss them with olive oil and your seasonings of choice.
4. Place them on a baking sheet, making sure not to overcrowd. Give the vegetables breathing room, so they brown rather than steam. For large batches, divide them among two sheets instead of scrunching them onto one.

Try a new take on salad.

“Salads of raw winter vegetables are unexpected and a total crowd-pleaser, even if your crowd is a small one,” says Grinshpan. “The trick is to let them marinate: The longer they sit, the better they get. The vegetables soak up the flavor of the vinaigrette, and the acid tenderizes them.” (Related: [10 Winter Vegetables, Fruits, and More to Buy at the Farmers Market](#))

To make a hearty, flavorful winter vegetable salad, finely chop or shave the winter veggies of your choice, like Brussels sprouts, [butternut squash](#), or carrots. Then, dress well with a bright, lemony vinaigrette, and let the salad marinate for at least 20 minutes. (P.S. You can also learn [how to eat oysters so you look fancy](#) from Grinshpan herself.)

Finish your winter vegetables with extra flavor.

“You can incorporate brightness into earthy winter vegetables with some flavorful accompaniments,” says Grinshpan. Here are her four favorites and how to use them.

- **Vinegar** imparts sweet, bright acidity. Add [vinegar](#) and [honey](#) to beets, place in a foil packet, and roast.
- **Capers** give vegetables salty and briny notes. Heat capers in a skillet until golden and crisp and stir into vinaigrettes. Drizzle over broccoli, [cauliflower](#), or Romanesco.
- **Labneh** adds welcome tang. Season it with salt and pepper and spread onto the bottom of a platter. Top with roasted carrots, [beets](#), or squash.
- **Preserved lemon** (like [these Moroccan-styles ones](#)) brings citrusy, zesty goodness to vegetables. Chop the rind, and combine it with an herb like parsley, plus olive oil, vinegar, and garlic. Spoon it over [roasted potatoes](#).

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