

Blanched Vegetables

From Nelson's Kitchen
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The exact amounts are not very important for this recipe. Blanching not only preserves the colours in the vegetables, but also gives a better flavour for the final dish

Ingredients:

- 8 small sweet peppers
- 2 or 3 sticks of celery
- 3 carrots
- 1 fennel bulb
- 1 cup of frozen peas
- salt
- freshly grounded pepper
- 3 to 4 tablespoons of olive oil
- lots of ice

Equipment:

- Large pot
- large bowl
- non-stick skillet
- Chinese strainer
- Colander

Procedure:

1. Prepare the vegetables

- Remove seeds and stems from the peppers and cut into small strips put in a bowl.
- Remove strings from celery ribs by lifting from the end of each rib and pulling. Cut the ribs on a diagonal into fine slices.
- Peel the carrots and cut into small wedges by rotating the carrot about a quart of a turn every time you cut it.
- Cut the fennel bulb in half, remove the hard core at the bottom. Then slice the fennel in the thin set of a mandolin. It will produce large slices. Using a chefs knife cut the slices into about three parts to make them smaller.

2. Set up for blanching

- Bring water to a fast boil in a large pot that has a cover.
- Put cold water in a large bowl and add lots of ice to it.

3. Blanch the vegetables

- Dump all the sliced fennel into the fast boiling water and immediately cover the pot.
- After about 30 seconds check to see if the water came back to a boil or is very hot. If not, allow another 20 or 30 seconds.
- Once the water is very hot or boiling, collect the fennel using the Chinese strainer, draining on top of the boiling pot for a few seconds and then dump into the ice cold water. Stir around the cold water to ensure that the fennel cools off as quickly as possible.
- Repeat collecting the fennel until they are all in the cold water.
- Cover the pot and let it come back to a full boil again.
- Once the fennel are cold, remove from the cold water using the Chinese strainer and place in a colander set over a bowl to completely drain the water.
- Transfer the drained fennel to a bowl and sprinkle with salt and let stand for at least 30 minutes.
- Repeat the process with the carrots, then the celery, and then the peppers.

4. Sautee the vegetables

- Place a serving plater in a warming oven (at 200 F).
- Dump each of the vegetables over a strainer set on top of a bowl to drain any water that accumulated while they were standing with the salt.
- Place olive oil into a cold non-stick skillet and put over moderate heat.
- Once the oil is shimmering, add the frozen peas to the oil and let it cook for a minute or so without stirring.
- Add all other vegetables to the peas and stir fry until they are all warmed through.
- Sprinkle with freshly grated black pepper.
- Transfer to the warmed up serving plater and serve immediately.