

Steamed Vegetables with Cheese Sauce (Use Béchamel sauce recipe)

Keys to steaming veggies:

- Cut the vegetables into uniform sizes
- Bring the water in the pan to a full rolling boil before adding the veggies (if possible)
- Have the level of the boiling water low enough so that the water does not touch the veggies
- Don't over-steam them

Equipment for steaming:

Saucepan with its own steam insert and lid

Steamer insert basket (can be purchased at most grocery stores)

Vegetable choices for steaming:

Broccoli

Summer or zucchini squash

Cauliflower

Green beans

Carrots

Potatoes

Peas/snow peas

Asparagus

Spinach, kale, or collard greens

Turnips

Method

1. Time the preparation of the cheese sauce so that it is finished just before the vegetables are fully steamed. Keep it warm until ready to serve.
2. Cut the vegetables into uniform sizes so that they cook at roughly the same rate and are all done at the same time.

Note: You can mix vegetables, but be aware that more tender vegetables, like broccoli, will cook faster than denser vegetables, like carrots. If you want to steam mixed vegetables at the same time, add the longer-cooking veggies first and then the quicker-cooking veggies after a minute or two.

3. Set a timer initially for three minutes, and then continue checking intermittently based on how quickly the veggies are cooking.
4. Take the vegetables out of the steamer basket when they still have just a bit of crunch in the middle.

Note: The guide below provides rough cooking times for various vegetables. They are fully cooked when they are just tender enough to pierce with a fork. Vegetables should retain their bright colors after steaming and should be firm.

Spinach and arugula: 3 minutes

Peas: 3 minutes

Broccoli florets, cauliflower florets, green beans: 5 to 7 minutes

Carrots, potatoes, turnips, squash: 8 to 20 minutes

Kale, spinach, and collards: 10 minutes

4. Plate the steamed veggies and drizzle hot cheese sauce over. Serve immediately.

What are the benefits of steaming vegetables rather than boiling?

Béchamel Sauce (White Sauce)

1. Warm/scald 1 1/4 cups milk in a small saucepan over very low heat (scald means to heat the milk until you see a white film clinging to the sides of the pan).
2. Melt in a medium, heavy saucepan over low heat:
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
3. Stir in:
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
4. Cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon or spatula, over medium-low heat until the roux is just fragrant but not darkened, 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Pour in the warm milk all at once and stir with a heat-resistant spatula. Bring the sauce slowly to a simmer, stirring and scraping the sides of the pan to return the thickened parts of the sauce to the solution. Cook over low heat without boiling, stirring often until the sauce reaches the consistency of thick cream soup, about 8 to 10 minutes.
6. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Note: To make a more savory sauce, add to the milk during scalding: 1/4 onion with 1 bay leaf stuck to it with two cloves and a pinch of nutmeg.



Variation – Cheese Sauce

After the sauce is thickened, remove from the heat and stir in:

1 cup of sharp cheddar cheese (not packed)

Serve hot.