



Creative Food Preparation Ideas for Limited Diets

Why Variety is Important

Whether your child has a limited diet due to severe picky eating, a special diet, or food allergies/sensitivities, variety is still important. Variety, of course, means a rotation of the food items that are presented/consumed but can also include the way the same food is prepared or cooked.

When you're not able to have a variety of the foods consumed, variety in preparation can be a way to prevent food burnout. Food burnout for an already-limited diet can be very stressful for both the parent and child. Follow these ideas to help prevent burnout and still have a variety even with few food options.

Get Choppin'!



Different Cooking Methods

Method	Details	Examples
Raw	Sometimes the best way to enjoy vegetables is to not cook them at all! Some children love the crunchiness of raw carrots, broccoli, and snap peas. If your child will accept it, you can also dip raw veggies into hummus and other healthy dips (try to keep these dairy and sugar-free!)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raw carrots, broccoli, snap peas, and radishes • Zucchini noodles/Zoodles • Fruit and vegetable smoothies - just add almond milk!
Roasted	My preferred way to cook veggies. It is usually the easiest way to cook veggies since you don't have to touch them much after you cut it. Roasting (or baking) a veggie in the oven caramelizes them in the hot oven and makes their flavors pop! It also usually adds a bit of a crunch. Just chop your veggies, spray on some avocado oil, and bake around 400° for 10-60 minutes (depending on the veggie)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roast sweet potatoes on 400 for 45-60 minutes until browning. • Roasted asparagus is delicious! Drizzle a little lemon juice and crack some salt and pepper. Roast on 425 for 12-15 minutes • Roast broccoli on 450 for 15-20 minutes. Feel free to add a little garlic powder and salt
Steamed	Steaming veggies retains the most nutrients (outside of eating them raw). These usually come out very crunchy and brightly colored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veggies that are great for steaming include asparagus and greens.
Boiled	Boiling veggies is a fast way to get crisp veggies, though it's easy to over-boil and get mushy veggies. A lot of the nutrients from the veggies are lost in the water when you pour it out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can boil just about any vegetable, though this is my least favorite method as many of the nutrients are lost in the water
Sautéed or Stir Fried	Add some avocado oil and veggies to a pan and get cooking! This can make veggies very aromatic. I like using some spices like garlic and cumin or chili powder to give it a little more taste.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The best veggies to sauté are greens, mushrooms, peppers, zucchini, onions, green beans, and asparagus
Air Fried	Air frying has become very popular because it is so quick and easy. You can find one on Amazon for as little as \$50.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To air fry most veggies all you have to do is preheat the airfryer, prep your veggies, and fry veggies for 15-20 minutes while shaking every 5-8 minutes.
Grilled	This is a little more involved than the others since you have to heat up a grill (unless you have a small tabletop grill). Grilling veggies is one of my favorite ways to prep since they come out so tender, juicy, and a little crunchy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grilling asparagus, peppers, and zucchini/squash is delicious! Wrap veggies in foil or use a grill pan for delicious veggies

Spices

Spices can be a great way to change up the flavor, even slightly!
Here are a few of my favorite spices:

Garlic powder

Onion powder

Cumin

Chili powder

Smoked paprika

Turmeric

Rosemary

Salt & pepper

Though not a spice, lemon juice is a great flavor!

