

GLOSSARY OF COOKING TERMS

A

ACORN SQUASH

Shaped like their namesake, are winter squash that are up to 6 inches in diameter and have deeply ridged, green skin and orange flesh. To prepare an acorn squash for cooking: Cut in half with a heavy knife. Tap the inserted knife with a kitchen mallet if the skin is very hard. Using a sharp-edged spoon, scrape out the seeds and fibers. Remove the skin with a vegetable peeler or paring knife. For other winter squash, see banana squash, butternut squash, pumpkin, and spaghetti squash.

ADOBO SAUCE

A tangy sauce whose basic ingredients include vinegar, soy sauce, garlic, pepper and chiles. Adobo is a national dish in the Philippines. It is also a cooking style and is used in preparations with pork, chicken, fish and even vegetables.

À LA KING

A dish of diced food (usually chicken or turkey) in a rich cream sauce containing mushrooms, pimientos, green peppers and sometimes sherry.

ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR

A medium protein content that makes it suitable for most baking uses. Store all-purpose flour in an airtight container for up to 1 year.

ALL SPICE

Available as whole berries or ground, is a sweet spice of Caribbean origin with a flavor suggesting a blend of cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg. The berries can be crushed to release more of their flavor.

AMANDINE

A French term meaning "garnished with almonds." Often misspelled "almondine."

ANDOUILLE SAUSAGE

Spicy Creole-Cajun smoked pork sausages that are highly seasoned with red pepper and garlic. They are sold in well-stocked grocery stores and meat markets.

ANGEL HAIR PASTA

An appropriately named cut of thin and delicate strands. They are called "capelli d'angelo" in Italian.

ANJOU PEAR

A large winter pear with firm flesh and a yellow-green skin that is often blushed with red. It's sweet and juicy. Can be eaten raw or cooked. Available in most regions October through mid-winter.

ANNA POTATOES

Classic French dish, it is thinly sliced potatoes baked in a shallow dish or pie plate. Layers of potatoes are buttered and sprinkled with salt and pepper. The dish is tightly covered with foil and the top weighted. After baking, the dish is inverted onto a serving plate and the potatoes turned out. The resulting dish is brown and crisp on the outside, soft and buttery on the inside. It's cut into wedges to serve.

ANNATTO SEED

Also known as achiote seed, is used as a coloring agent in butter, margarine, cheese and smoked fish.

APPLES

Versatile tree fruits sold in many varieties for cooking or eating raw. Among the most popular are the slightly tart, red-skinned Rome; the slightly tart, green-skinned pippin and Granny Smith; the mildly tart, red-skinned Jonathan; and the sweet, yellow-skinned Golden Delicious. Controlled storage ensures a good supply of apples year-round. Choose firm, unblemished fruit; store in the refrigerator or in a cool, dark place.

ARBORIO RICE

An Italian variety, has short, plump grains that are high in starch content and, when cooked, have a creamy, saucelike consistency. Used in risottos, rice puddings, and other dishes, arborio rice is available in Italian delicatessens and well-stocked food stores.

ARROWROOT

The starchy product of a tropical tuber. The rootstalks are dried and ground into a super fine powder. It is used as a thickening agent much like cornstarch and is more easily digested than wheat flour. Its thickening power is about twice that of wheat flour. Arrowroot is tasteless and becomes clear when cooked. Unlike cornstarch, it doesn't have a chalky taste when it is undercooked. It should be mixed with a cold liquid before being heated or added to hot mixtures.

ARTICHOKE HEARTS

The tender inner portion beneath the leaves of globe artichokes. They are available canned, in jars and frozen.

ARUGULA

Also known as rocket, is a green leaf vegetable with slender, multiple-lobed leaves that have a peppery, slightly bitter flavor.

ASIAGO CHEESE

A semi-firm Italian cheese with a rich, nutty flavor. It's made from whole or part-skim cow's milk and comes in small wheels with glossy rinds. The yellow interior has many small holes. It can be used as a table cheese, or aged over 1 year, it becomes hard and suitable for grating.

ASIAN PEAR

Variety developed by crossbreeding pears and apples, combining the mild flavor of the former with the crispness of the latter.

ASSORTED GREENS

Available by the pound, can also be assembled using greens with a variety of colors, tastes, and textures, such as arugula, radicchio, mizuno, oak and red leaf lettuces, red and white cabbage, dandelion greens, and sorrel.

AU GRATIN

A dish that is topped with cheese or breadcrumbs mixed with butter, then heated in the oven or under the broiler until crisp and brown.

AU JUS

A French phrase describing meat served with its own natural juices, commonly used with beef.

AU LAIT

French for "with milk," referring to foods or beverages served or prepared with milk.

B BAGUETTE

Traditional, French-style yeast bread made with wheat flour, is a long, narrow loaf usually about 24 inches in length and no more than about 4 inches in diameter.

BAKING POTATO

Also known as russet or Idaho potatoes, are oval tuberous vegetables with thick brown skins and white flesh that has a dry, mealy texture when cooked. They are ideal for baking, mashing, or frying. Choose firm, well-shaped potatoes, without sprouts or a greenish cast. Store in a dark, dry place for several weeks.

BAKING POWDER

A commercial product used to leaven baked goods. It consists of three ingredients: baking soda, the source of the carbon dioxide gas that causes the dough or batter to rise; an acid, such as cream of tartar, calcium acid phosphate, or sodium aluminum sulphate, which, when the powder is combined with a liquid, causes the baking soda to release its gas; and a starch such as cornstarch (corn flour) or flour, to prevent the powder from absorbing moisture.

BAKING SODA

Also known as bicarbonate of soda or sodium bicarbonate, supplies the carbon dioxide gas that leavens batters and doughs. It is often used when acidic ingredients such as buttermilk, yogurt, or citrus juices are present.

BALSAMIC VINEGAR

A centuries-old specialty of Modena, Italy, is made from reduced grape juice and is aged and blended for many years in a succession of casks made of different woods and gradually diminishing in size. The result is a thick, tart-sweet, intensely aromatic vinegar.

BAMBOO SHOOTS

The crisp, mild-flavored, white to ivory shoots of the bamboo plant. They are a popular ingredient in stir-fries and other Asian dishes. Bamboo shoots are sold canned, packed in water. Drain and rinse well before use.

BAY LEAVES

The dried whole leaves of the bay laurel tree, used to add a pungent, spicy flavor to savory dishes. The French variety, available in specialty food shops, has a milder, sweeter flavor than California bay leaves. Discard the leaves before serving. Store bay leaves in an airtight container in a cool, dark place and use within 1 year.

BASIL

An intensely aromatic green-leaved herb popular in Italian and French cooking. Its sweet, somewhat spicy flavor enhances tomato-based dishes and sauces, and Italian pesto. Fresh basil is plentiful in summer; dried basil is always available in supermarket spice sections. Immerse freshly cut stems of basil in water, cover with a plastic bag, and refrigerate for several days. Thai basil, a highly aromatic variety with dark green leaves and purplish stems, is sold in Asian markets and some well-stocked produce markets. Crush dried basil in the palm of the hand to release its flavor. To chop or mince fresh basil: Remove the leaves from the stems. Gather the leaves and, using a chef's knife, chop coarsely. To mince, gather the chopped leaves. Steadying the top of the blade, rock the knife in an arc until desired fineness is reached.

BELL PEPPERS

also known as capsicums, are sweet-fleshed, bell-shaped members of the pepper family, enjoyed raw or cooked. Unripe green and ripened red or yellow varieties are the most common. Pale yellow, orange, and purple-black types are also available. Italian peppers are slightly sweeter and more slender than regular peppers. Before use, bell peppers must have their indigestible seeds removed. Often the peppers are roasted, which loosens their skins for peeling and enhances their natural sweetness. To seed a bell pepper: Cut the pepper in half lengthwise and cut or pull out the stem and seeds, along with the white ribs, or veins, to which the seeds are attached. To roast a bell pepper: Preheat a broiler or an oven to 500°F. Place the pepper halves, cut sides down, on a baking sheet and slip under the broiler or in the oven. Roast until the skin blisters and begins to blacken. Remove from the oven and place in a paper bag or cover with aluminum foil. Let steam for 10-15 minutes, then peel off the skin using your fingers or a knife.

BIBB LETTUCE

Type of butterhead lettuce with loosely formed leaves and soft, buttery texture. Also known as butter lettuce.

BISCOTTIS

Italian cookies that are twice baked. They are made by first baking it in a loaf, then slicing the loaf and baking the slices. This results in a crunchy cookie that is perfect for dipping into dessert wine or coffee. Various flavoring agents can be added to the dough such as anise seed, hazelnuts or almonds.

BITTERSWEET CHOCOLATE

A lightly sweetened eating or baking chocolate that generally contains about 40% cocoa butter. For superior quality, look for bittersweet chocolate with at least 50% cocoa butter. Store chocolate well wrapped in a cool, dry place for up to four months.

BLACK BEANS

Small beans with deep black skins, an earthy flavor, and a mealy texture. Also called turtle beans, they are available dried and precooked in cans.

BLACK-EYED PEAS

Dried peas that are beige in color with a small black "eye" in their centers. When cooked, the peas have an earthy flavor. They are sold packaged or in bulk.

BLANCHED

To plunge food into boiling water briefly, then into cold water to stop the cooking process. Blanching is used to firm the flesh, to loosen skins (as with peaches and tomatoes) and to heighten and set flavor and color (as with vegetables before freezing).

BOILING ONIONS

Small, white pungent onions that are about 1 inch in diameter, slightly larger than pearl onions. They are added whole to stews and other dishes and cooked until soft.

BOILING POTATOES

A medium-sized tuberous vegetable with thin, tan skin and flesh that ranges from white to the yellow of Rose Fir or White Rose varieties. The texture of cooked boiling potato is finer than that of baking potato. Choose firm, well-shaped potato without sprouts or a greenish cast. Store in a dark, dry place for several weeks.

BOK CHOY

Chinese variety of cabbage, has elongated, crisp white stalks, dark green leaves, and a refreshing, slightly peppery flavor. Both stalks and leaves are used raw or cooked. Full-size and baby bok choy as small as 4 inches in length are available.

BOSTON LETTUCE

A type of butterhead lettuce. Slightly larger than its close relative Bibb, but with similar soft, buttery leaves. Also known as butter lettuce.

BOUQUET GARNI

Meaning literally “garnished bouquet” in French, is a mixture of herbs used to impart flavor to soups and other simmered dishes. The herbs are enclosed in cheesecloth or a similarly porous container to prevent them from escaping during cooking. A bouquet garni usually includes dried bay leaves and fresh parsley and thyme. To make a bouquet garni: Place the herbs in the center of a small square of cheesecloth. Bring the corners together and tie securely with kitchen string. Or, combine all ingredients in tea ball and secure the top. For other herbs, see basil, bay leaves, borage, chervil, chives, cilantro, dill, epazote, fennel, fines herbes, garlic chives, herbes de Provence, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, summer savory, tarragon, and thyme.

BRAISING

A cooking method by which food is browned with fat, then cooked slowly in covered pot with little moisture at low heat for a lengthy period of time. This process breaks down the fiber of the food, enhancing the flavor and tenderizing the meat. A well-covered pot is very important to prevent water from evaporating.

BREAD FLOUR

The best flour for bread making, is ground from hard wheat, which has a high protein and low starch content.

BREAD CRUMBS

Fresh or dried, coarse or fine, are used to add body and texture to sweet and savory preparations. Dried bread crumbs, usually fine-textured, are sold prepackaged. Store covered, at room temperature.

BRINE

A strong solution of water and salt used for pickling or preserving foods. In the case of turkeys, they can be soaked in this solution for 24 hours, then roasted. The result is a saltier flavored bird. Use only fresh turkeys for this method.

BROCCOLI RAAB

Resembles thin, leafy, sparsely budded broccoli stalks. It has a very bitter and pungent taste and is available year-round, but is most plentiful from late fall to spring. It is an excellent source of vitamins A and C and is high in calcium and iron. The greens can be braised, steamed or fried and are good in soups and salads. Store it in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. Broccoli raab is also known as rapini, rabe and broccoli di rape.

BROTH

Also known as stock, is a liquid derived from slowly simmering poultry, meat, fish, or vegetables in water, along with herbs. It is used as a primary cooking liquid or to moisten or flavor foods as they cook. Broth may be made from beef bones, chicken bones and parts, fish skeletons, lamb bones, or a variety of vegetables. Broth can be made by the home cook and stored in the refrigerator or freezer for future use. Some, such as beef, chicken, and fish, are available canned, frozen, or in concentrated form. Also see canned broth, bouillon cubes, and court bouillon.

BROWN RICE

A variety from which only the outer husk is removed during milling, leaving a nutritious, fiber-rich coating of bran that gives the kernels their chewy texture and nutlike flavor. Short-, medium-, or long-grain brown rice is available.

BROWN SUGAR

Granulated sugar that is combined with molasses in varying quantities to yield golden, light, or dark brown sugar, with crystals varying from coarse to finely granulated. Store sugar indefinitely in an airtight container.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Sold fresh or frozen, are small, spherical green vegetables, usually 1-2 inches in diameter. They are related to cabbage and resemble cabbage in both appearance and flavor. The best Brussels sprouts are small with tight heads and no odor. They are most flavorful if purchased still on the stalk; trim off just before cooking. Store for up to 5 days in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. To trim Brussels sprouts: Remove any yellow or bruised leaves. Slice off the stem.

BUTTERMILK

The tangy, butter-flecked liquid left over when whole milk has been churned to make butter. Most commercial buttermilk sold in food stores is a cultured form made by adding lactic-acid bacteria to low-fat or nonfat milk.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH

One of the most popular winter squashes, is large and elongated in shape, with one end that is almost spherical. The tan skin covers bright orange, slightly sweet flesh. Butternut squash is also known as pumpkin squash. To prepare butternut squash for cooking: Cut in half with a heavy knife. Tap the inserted knife with a kitchen mallet if the skin is very hard. Using a sharp-edged spoon, scrape out the seeds and fibers. Remove the skin with a vegetable peeler or paring knife.

BUTTON MUSHROOMS

Mild-flavored cultivated white mushrooms in their smallest form, with their caps still closed. Select firm, plump mushrooms that are not slimy or bruised. Store in the refrigerator, unwashed and lightly wrapped in paper towels or in a paper bag, never in plastic. To clean fresh button mushrooms: Remove the grit by wiping the mushrooms with a damp paper towel or mushroom brush. For a more thorough cleaning, swish the mushrooms very briefly in water, then pat dry with paper towels.

C CABBAGES

Large heads of compact leaves, round or elongated in shape and light or dark green, red, or white in color-formed around a thick core. They are available fresh year-round. Pick a firm, heavy head with unblemished leaves and a moist core. Store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for 2 weeks.

CAKE FLOUR

Also known as soft-wheat flour, is a very fine-textured bleached flour used for making cakes and other baked goods. It is lower in protein than all-purpose flour, which is not an acceptable substitute.

CANNED BROTH

A commercial product that can be used as a substitute for homemade stock. Chicken, beef, and vegetable broth is available in most grocery stores.

CANOLA OIL

Made from rape seeds and is also known as rapeseed oil. Canola oil has a high smoking point and its mild flavor makes it a good choice for salad dressings as well as cooking. Canola oil is the healthy choice for today's cooks. It is cholesterol free and with only 1 gram of fat, it has 50% less saturated fat than olive or other vegetable oils.

CAYENNE PEPPER

Is a very hot ground spice derived from dried cayenne chili peppers.

CHAYOTE

A pear-shaped member of the squash family, has a mild flavor and a moist texture reminiscent of cucumbers or zucchini. Although one variety has dark green, prickly skin, most chayotes available outside Mexico have relatively smooth, pale green skin.

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CHERVIL

An herb with small leaves resembling flat-leaf (Italian) parsley, has a subtle flavor reminiscent of both parsley and anise. Store fresh chervil in the refrigerator, wrapped in paper towels and enclosed in a plastic bag. Dried chervil should be stored away from light, heat, and moisture for up to 1 year. Crush dried dill in the palm of the hand to release its flavor.

CHESTNUTS

Edible fruit of a tree in the beech family, have glossy brown shells and dark fuzzy membranes that must be removed before use. Often referred to by the French "marrons," these sweet nuts are sold raw or roasted, whole or in pieces, candied or puréed. To peel chestnuts: Score an X on the flat side of each shell. Set the chestnuts in a pan large enough to hold them in a single layer. Place in a preheated 400°F oven for about 15 minutes, until the shells begin to turn brittle and peel back at the X. While still warm, peel off the shells and skin. For other nut varieties, see almonds, Brazil nuts, candlenuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamianuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts.

CHICKPEAS

Round, tan-colored members of the pea family that are often referred to as dried beans. They have a firm texture and a mildly nutlike flavor. Available dried or precooked in cans, they are also known as garbanzo beans or ceci beans. Dried beans require soaking to rehydrate them.

CHILES

Range in color from light yellow to a deep black color. There are over a hundred varieties each with a different level of capsaicin (a naturally-occurring phytochemical in peppers causing the sensation of heat). Capsaicin determines their heat level, which can vary from mild to extremely hot. Widely used in Mexican cooking.

CHILI POWDER

Refers to any of a wide variety of commercial spice blends for seasoning spicy dishes. Along with ground dried chiles, it also includes cumin, oregano, cloves, coriander, pepper, and salt. It is best purchased in small quantities, as flavor diminishes rapidly after opening. For other spices, see allspice, aniseeds, caraway, cardamom, cayenne pepper, Chinese five-spice powder, cinnamon, cloves, coriander seeds, cumin, curry powder, fennel seeds, garam masala, ginger, juniper berries, mace, nutmeg, paprika, pepper, peppercorns, saffron, Sichuan pepper, star anise, sumac, and turmeric.

CHILI SAUCE

A commercial bottled blend of hot and mild chiles, vinegar, sugar, and other flavorings, used as a seasoning ingredient or a condiment. Some varieties are also tomatobased.

CHINESE FIVE-SPICE POWDER

A popular Chinese ground savory seasoning, is reddish brown in color and usually combines star anise, fennel or aniseeds, cloves, cinnamon, and Sichuan peppercorns. It is sold in Asian markets and well-stocked grocery stores.

CHIPOTLE CHILES

Ripened jalapeño chiles that are smoke-dried. They are also canned in a thick vinegar-based adobo sauce. To handle chipotle chiles: Wear kitchen gloves to prevent any cuts or abrasions on your hands from contacting the volatile oils. Wash your hands well with warm, soapy water after handling the chiles, and do not touch your eyes or other sensitive areas.

CHIVES

The long, thin green shoots of the chive plant used as an herb, have a mild flavor reminiscent of the onion, to which they are related. Although chives are available dried, snipped fresh chives have the best flavor. Store fresh chives in the refrigerator, wrapped in paper towels and enclosed in a plastic bag.

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CHORIZO SAUSAGES

Spiced with chiles, garlic, and other seasonings. These Mexican- or Spanish-style coarse-textured fresh pork sausages are available in well-stocked grocery stores and Latin markets.

CHUTNEY

Refers to the spiced East Indian-style relishes or pickles used as a condiment or a seasoning ingredient. Most common are fruit-based chutneys—apricot, plum, peach, and mango.

CIDER VINEGAR

A pale, golden vinegar with the fruity flavor and crisp tang of apple cider.

CILANTRO

A leafy green herb resembling flat-leaf (Italian) parsley, has a sharp, aromatic, somewhat astringent flavor. Popular in Latin American and Asian cuisines, it is commonly referred to as Chinese parsley or fresh coriander. Store cilantro in the refrigerator, wrapped in paper towels and enclosed in a plastic bag.

CLARIFIED BUTTER

Unsalted butter with the milk solids removed. To clarify butter, melt unsalted butter in a heavy saucepan over low heat. Skim off the froth from the top and carefully pour the clear liquid into a jar, leave the milky residue behind. Clarified butter is used in sautés, sauces and in baked dishes. It is also commonly used in Indian cooking and may be referred to as drawn butter or ghee.

CLOVES

A rich, aromatic East African spice, used whole or ground to flavor sweet and savory recipes.

COCOA

A fine-textured chocolate powder that is available sweetened and unsweetened. Dutch-process cocoa, an unsweetened type, is specially treated to make a dark-colored, mellow-flavored product.

COCOA POWDER

An unsweetened powder made from cocoa beans. The nibs from the dried beans are ground and the fat (cocoa butter) is extracted. The result is a dark brown paste called chocolate liquor. This paste is dried and then ground into a powder. This powder is unsweetened cocoa. Dutch cocoa, which is darker and richer, has been treated with an alkali, such as baking soda, which helps neutralize cocoa's natural acidity.

COCONUT CREAM

The thick, extra rich layer that rises to the top of coconut milk, which is sold in cans in well-stocked grocery stores and Asian markets.

COCONUT MILK

Is a rich, creamy liquid made from water and coconut pulp. It is a staple ingredient in Thai curries and in beverages, sauces, soups, and desserts throughout southeast Asia. Unsweetened coconut milk is available in cans at well-stocked grocery stores and Asian markets. Do not substitute cream of coconut.

CONDENSED MILK

Is whole milk from which approximately 60% of the water has been removed, resulting in a concentrated flavor and thick consistency. Although similar to evaporated milk, it cannot be substituted for evaporated milk in recipes. It is sold in cans.

CONFECTIONERS' SUGAR

Also known as powdered or icing sugar, is a finely pulverized sugar that dissolves quickly and is often used to provide a thin, white decorative coating. To prevent it from absorbing moisture in the air and caking, manufacturers often add a little cornstarch. Store sugar indefinitely in an airtight container.

COOKING SPRAY

Oil, usually olive oil, in a pressurized can. It comes out in spray form, and available in various flavorings.

CORIANDER

A close relative to parsley and can be used for its perfumed seeds as well as its fragrant leaves. Grind the seeds and use in baked goods and curries; whole they are a main ingredient in the spice blend used in pickling. The leaves, also known as cilantro or Chinese parsley, are widely used in Latin American and Asian dishes and seem to prompt a love-hate reaction in most North Americans and Europeans. Choose coriander with bright green leaves free from blemishes. Store wrapped in a damp paper towel or cloth in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. Rinse only when ready to use. See also cilantro and coriander seeds.

CORN BREAD STUFFING MIX

A commercial product that combines corn bread or cornmeal, often flavored with herbs, to which celery, onions, and stock are added to make a stuffing for poultry. It is available in well-stocked grocery stores.

CORN OIL

Made from the germ of the corn kernel. It has a high smoke point and is extremely high in polyunsaturated fats. Corn oil is typically used in salad dressings, mayonnaise and is the main ingredient in margarine.

CORN SYRUP

A sweet syrup extracted from corn. It is sold as light corn syrup, which is slightly sweet and bland, or dark corn syrup, which tastes like molasses.

CORNMEAL

A granular flour ground from dried kernels of yellow or white corn, has a sweet, robust flavor. Commercial cornmeal is available in fine or coarse grinds. Stone-ground cornmeal, made from whole kernels, produces a richer flour.

CORNSTARCH

A fine, powdery flour ground from the endosperm, or white heart, of the corn kernel. Lacking gluten, it is used as a neutral-flavored thickening agent in such preparations as sauces and fillings and to give baked goods a delicate texture. It is also known as cornflour.

COUSCOUS

Tiny pellets of semolina, the ground endosperm of durum wheat, are a type of pasta used throughout North Africa, especially in Morocco and Tunisia.

CRANBERRIES

Are tart, round, deep red berries, grown primarily in wet, sandy coastal lands, or bogs, in the northern United States. They are available fresh autumn through early winter and frozen year-round.

CRANBERRY SAUCE

Is a traditional sauce typically eaten during the holiday season. This classic sauce can be purchased pre-made in cans or whole, fresh cranberries are available seasonally in plastic bags and can be used to prepare homemade sauces.

CREAM

Is classified by its butterfat content. Heavy cream, used for whipping, is 36 percent butterfat. Light cream, sometimes called coffee cream or table cream, is 18-30% butterfat. If light cream is unavailable, use equal parts heavy cream and half-and-half. To whip cream: Chill cream well and place in a large chilled bowl. With a chilled whisk or electric beaters, beat briskly to desired consistency, ranging from soft, loose folds to stiff peaks. Flavoring or sweetener can be added before or during whipping.

CREAM CHEESE

Is a smooth, white, mild-tasting cheese made from cream and milk. Purchase in bulk at good-quality delicatessens for a cheese with a better taste and a creamier texture.

CREAM OF TARTAR

An acidic powder extracted during wine making, stabilizes egg whites and increases their heat tolerance. It also prevents sugar syrups from crystallizing and is combined with baking soda to make commercial baking powder.

CROOKNECK SQUASH

Summer squashes with yellow skin and pale flesh with a slightly sweet flavor. They have a bulbous flower end and a slender, curving stem end. Choose a squash that is heavy for its size and does not have cracks or bruises. Store in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

CRUSHED RED PEPPER

Coarsely ground flakes of dried red chiles, including seeds, that have a moderately hot flavor and are used as a seasoning.

CRYSTALLIZED GINGER

Also called candied ginger, is made of small pieces of fresh ginger (the rhizome, or underground stem, of a semitropical plant) that are first preserved and then coated with granulated sugar. It is used to lend an intriguing hot-sweetness to baked goods and desserts. Store in a cool, dry place for up to 6 months.

CUMIN

A dusky, aromatic Middle Eastern spice with a strong, distinctive flavor. It is sold ground or as whole, small, crescent-shaped seeds.

CURRANTS

Dried fruits produced from a small variety of grapes. They resemble tiny raisins but have a stronger, tarter flavor. Currants are occasionally available fresh.

CURRY POWDER

Is a generic term for blends of spices used to flavor East Indian-style dishes. Most include coriander, cumin, ground dried chili, fenugreek, turmeric, and cloves. Blends labeled Madras are often hotter than other commercial products.

CUSTARD

Is a thick, rich, sweet mixture made by gently cooking together egg yolks, sugar, milk or cream, and sometimes other flavorings. It is enjoyed on its own or is used to make other sweet and savory dishes.

D**DASH**

A measuring term referring to a very small amount of seasoning added to food. Somewhere between 1/16 and a scant 1/8 teaspoon.

DEEP-FRY

To cook food in hot fat or oil that completely covers the food. The oil or fat used should have a high smoke point (the point to which it can be heated without smoking).

DIJON MUSTARD

Gets its name from the city in France it originated in. The mustard is made from brown or black mustard seeds and has a pale yellow color and smooth consistency. It can range from mild to hot.

DILL

Store fresh dill in the refrigerator, wrapped in paper towels and enclosed in a plastic bag. Dried dill, found with other seasonings in all supermarkets, should be stored away from light, heat, and moisture for up to 1 year. Crush dried dill in the palm of the hand to release its flavor.

DRIED FRUITS

Such as apricots, cherries, and cranberries have an intense flavor and concentrated sweetness that enhance both sweet and savory preparations. Dried fruits are also favorite additions to baked goods.

DRIPPINGS

The melted fat and juices that gather in the bottom of the pan in which meat or other food is cooked. Drippings are used as a base for gravies and sauces and in which to cook other food (such as Yorkshire Pudding).

DRIZZLE

To slowly pour a liquid mixture in a very fine stream over food (such as sweet glaze over cake or bread or melted butter over food before baking).

E**ENDIVE**

Three main varieties: Belgian endive, curly endive, and escarole. Belgian endive, available October through April, has spear-shaped leaves that are white to pale yellow-green or sometimes red in color and is used for delicate salads. Curly endive and escarole can be purchased all year round with a peak season from June through October and are used in salads as well as sautés, soups, and pastas. Both have curved green leaves with curly endive being a bit prickly and slightly bitter. Choose endive with tightly packed leaves free of blemishes. Store Belgian endive wrapped in paper towels and sealed in a plastic bag for no more than two days in the refrigerator. Curly endive and escarole can be stored for up to four days.

ENGLISH MUFFINS

Round, flat yeast breads, about 4 inches in diameter, that are cooked on a griddle rather than baked in an oven. They are cut in half before using and often toasted. English muffins are commonly available in food stores.

EVAPORATED MILK

Is whole milk from which approximately sixty percent of the water has been removed. Unlike condensed milk, it is heat-treated for sterilization. Available canned, evaporated milk can be combined with an equal amount of water to yield whole milk.

EXTRACTS

Produced by distilling the essential oils of fruits, nuts, and other plants, then dissolving them in an alcohol base. Almond, coffee and vanilla are among the most common.

F FAVA BEANS

Also known as broad beans, resemble oversized lima beans. They are sold fresh or dried. Fresh fava beans are sold in their long, plump, flattened pods and are easily shelled. The tough but edible skin can be removed. Dried beans require soaking to rehydrate them.

FENNEL

A crisp, mildly anise-flavored vegetable with a creamy or greenish white bulb and tubular celerylike stalks with feathery leaves. It is also called by its Italian name, "finocchio." Choose bulbs that are free of cracks or brown spots. The fine, feathery leaves, or fronds, are used as a fresh herb.

FENNEL SEEDS

Small, crescent-shaped seeds from a variety of fennel related to the bulb vegetable of the same name. Used as a spice, they are prized for their mild anise flavor.

FETA CHEESE

A traditional brine-cured Greek goat's or sheep's milk cheese, is white, salty, and sharp tasting and has a consistency that ranges from creamy to crumbly and dry. Some feta cheeses are now made of cow's milk.

FILO

Also spelled "phyllo," refers to tissue-thin sheets of flour-and-water dough, generally measuring 10 by 14 inches, used as wrappers for savory or sweet fillings. The name derives from the Greek word for "leaf." Sold fresh or frozen, the pastry sheets must be separated and handled carefully to avoid tearing. Be sure to thaw frozen filo in the refrigerator before use. When working with filo, keep those sheets you are not handling at the moment well covered to prevent them from drying out.

FINGERLING POTATO

An unusual potato, is grown predominantly in the U.S. and in Mexico. Its flavor is slightly sweet but similar to regular potatoes. It can be prepared like other potatoes; mashed, baked or boiled. It is best enjoyed with mild seasonings to appreciate its subtle flavors. This potato is named for its unique finger-like appearance. It is a good source of fiber, potassium and vitamin C. Recommended storage: 45-50°F. Keep cool, dry and dark. Potatoes exposed to light or stored in extremes of temperature (cold or hot) can develop elevated levels of a naturally occurring alkaloid called solanin. Its presence can be detected by green coloration. Cutting away the green spots removes most of this substance, which can be toxic.

FLOCK

A large group of turkeys.

FOCACCIA

is an Italian flatbread often topped with olive oil, herbs, garlic, and cheese. Focaccia can be eaten as a snack or served as an accompaniment to soups and salads.

FOOD MILL

a kitchen utensil that can best be described as a mechanical sieve. It has a handturned paddle that forces food through a strainer plate at the bottom, thereby removing skin, seeds and fiber.

FREE-RANGE OR FREE-ROAMING TURKEY

To be labeled as such, poultry has been allowed access to being outside. In some cases, that means poultry pens were kept outdoors instead of in large barn-like structures. Does not necessarily mean turkey has been given run of the farm. Consumers may prefer free-range poultry because they prefer the taste (due to more exercised muscles) or the less crowded, more humane conditions in which the turkeys were raised. They are processed in the same manner as other turkey.

FREEZER BURN

Frozen food that has been either improperly wrapped or frozen can suffer from freezer burn a loss of moisture that affects both texture and flavor. Freezer burn is indicated by a dry surface, which may also have white or gray spots on it.

FRENCH BREAD

A European style of yeast bread, has a crisp crust and a coarse-textured crumb. It is usually shaped into a long loaf.

G**GARBANZO BEANS**

Round, tan-colored members of the pea family that are often referred to as dried beans. They have a firm texture and a mildly nutlike flavor. Available dried or precooked in cans, they are also known as chickpeas or ceci beans. Dried beans require soaking to rehydrate them.

GARLIC

The pungent bulb used both raw and cooked as a flavoring ingredient is composed of numerous small cloves covered in a papery outer skin. It is used as a savory seasoning for almost every course of a meal. Aromatic and almost bitter when raw, garlic becomes delicate and sweet when cooked. It is best purchased as a whole head of dry garlic. Individual cloves can be separated from the head and peeled as needed. Look for fresh garlic heads that are plump and firm; do not purchase more than you will use in 1 or 2 weeks. Store heads of garlic in a cool, dark, dry place. To peel a garlic clove: Place the clove on a work surface and cover with the side of a large chef's knife. Press down firmly but carefully on the side of the knife to crush the clove slightly. The dry skin will slip off easily. To chop or mince garlic: Using a chef's knife, trim off the root end of the peeled clove. Slice the clove lengthwise. Stack the slices, then cut crosswise. Chop or mince until desired fineness is reached.

GARLIC POWDER

Made from dehydrated garlic flakes that have been ground into a powdery substance. It is used as a seasoning.

GELATIN

In its unflavored form, gives delicate body to mousses and parfaits. It is available both in thin, clear leaves and as a powder.

GHERKINS

A variety of small, dark green cucumbers grown especially to make pickles. Gherkins are typically sold packed in pickling brine. The French version of gherkins is cornichons.

GIBLETS

organs of the turkey that are packaged and usually found in the body cavity of a fresh or frozen turkey.

GIBLETS PACKAGE

The package contains the heart a heart shaped muscular organ that contracts to force circulation of blood. Deep burgundy to reddish brown with varying amounts of light colored fat on outside.

GIZZARD

firm muscular enlargement of alimentary canal whose thick muscular walls grind the food. Reddish brown with bluish coloration and varying amounts of light colored fat on exterior. Liver Gland associated with digestive tract that secretes digestive enzymes. Uniform reddish brown color. Feels softest of the three giblets. All can be cooked and used most frequently in dressing or for broth for gravy.

GINGER

The rhizome, or underground stem, of a semitropical plant, yields a strong-flavored spice. Whole rhizomes, commonly called roots, may be purchased fresh. They have a lively, hot flavor and peppery aroma. Select fresh ginger that is firm, not shriveled. Wrap in a paper towel and refrigerate for two to three weeks. Ground, dried ginger, which is more subtle and sweet in flavor, is sold in jars or tins; store in a cool, dark place for up to 6 months. Pieces of ginger preserved in syrup are popular in sweet Asian dishes. Fresh ginger is peeled before using in recipes. To peel fresh ginger: Remove the brown, papery skin with a small paring knife or vegetable peeler. To chop fresh ginger: After peeling, chop ginger with a chef's knife or process in a food processor fitted with the metal blade. To grate fresh ginger: After peeling, draw ginger across the fine holes of a metal grater or shredder or across a bamboo or porcelain ginger grater.

GLUTEN FLOUR

Made from hard wheat, contains a high percentage of gluten, the protein in wheat flour that gives dough an elastic quality and helps it rise. It is often used in combination with low-gluten flours.

GNOCCHI

Refers to small dumplings, usually made of potato dough, and to small dumplingshaped pasta.

GORGONZOLA CHEESE

A specialty of Lombardy, is named for a town just outside of Milan, Italy. It is a mild, creamy, pale yellow blue-veined cheese made from fresh cow's milk.

GRANULATED SUGAR

The term for the standard, widely used form of pure white sugar. Do not use superfine granulated sugar unless specified. Store sugar indefinitely in an airtight container.

GREAT NORTHERN BEANS

Small or large, kidney-shaped white beans with a mild flavor. They are available dried or precooked in cans. If unavailable, substitute white (navy) beans. Dried beans require soaking to rehydrate them.

GREEN BEANS

Edible fresh green pods available in many varieties. They are at their peak season in summer. The small tender variety known as Blue Lake are particularly prized. Another variety is the small delicate French bean, or haricot vert. To trim green beans: Slice off the stems and tips with a paring knife. If desired, cut or break the beans in half.

GREEN OLIVES

The small fruits of trees that are native to Mediterranean Europe. Picked in their unripened state and then cured, green olives are generally more sharp tasting than ripe black olives. Pitted olives are occasionally stuffed with strips of pickled red pimientos. Quality Italian green olives are sold in well-stocked food stores. Green olives are sold by the pound and in bottles or cans.

GREEN ONIONS

A variety of onion harvested immature before the bulb has formed. Both the green leaves and white bulbs are used raw or cooked for their mild but still pronounced onion flavor. Green onions are also known as scallions or spring onions.

GRITS

Refers to any coarsely ground grain including corn, oats or rice. Grits are very popular in the southern United States and are typically prepared as hot cereal or served as a side dish.

GROUND RED PEPPER

Finely ground flakes of dried red chiles, including seeds, that have a moderately hot flavor and are used as a seasoning.

GRUYERE CHEESE

A variety of Swiss cheese with small holes, has a firm, smooth texture and a relatively strong flavor.

GUAVAS

Sweet, tropical fruit native to South America. The fruit may be round, ovoid or pear shaped, 2-4 inches in diameter. These thin-skinned fruits can range from yellow to dark purple, and the flesh can be pale yellow to bright red. Typically, they are only found fresh in regions where they are grown. Guavas are available in supermarkets canned, as jam, jelly or sauce.

H HABAÑERO CHILES

Small, lantern-shaped green or ripened red chiles measuring about 2 inches (5 cm) in length and up to 1 3/4 inches (4.5 cm) wide. This fresh or dried chile—literally, the Havana chili—is one of the hottest available, more than 30 times hotter than the fiery jalapeño. Its flavor is notable for hints of tropical fruit. To handle habañero chiles: Wear kitchen gloves to prevent any cuts or abrasions on your hands from contacting the volatile oils. Wash your hands well with warm, soapy water after handling chiles, and do not touch your eyes or other sensitive areas.

HALAL

An Arabic word which means “lawful” or “allowed”. The opposite of halal is haram, which means “unlawful” or “prohibited”. Halal foods are foods that are permitted for consumption by Muslims under the Islamic law. All foods are considered halal except the following, which are haram: swine/pork and its by-products; animals improperly slaughtered or dead before slaughtering; animals killed in the name of anyone other than Allah (God); alcohol and intoxicants; carnivorous animals, birds of prey and animals without external ears; blood and blood by-products; foods contaminated with any of the above products. Foods containing ingredients such as gelatin, enzymes, emulsifiers, etc. are questionable (mashbooh) because of the origin of these ingredients is not known.

HALF AND HALF

A commercial dairy product that is half milk and half light cream.

HARD SAUCE

The traditional accompaniment for plum pudding, hard sauce is made by beating butter, sugar and flavoring together until smooth and creamy. The sugar can be confectioners', granulated or brown. The flavoring is generally brandy, rum or whiskey, though vanilla or other extracts may also be used. This mixture is refrigerated until "hard" (the texture of butter). It's often spooned into a decorative mold before chilling and unmolded before serving. Hard sauce is known in England as brandy butter.

HARICOT VERT

The French term for "green string bean." These beans are small and thin and can be prepared in a variety of ways.

HEAD LETTUCE

Generally, the term head lettuce describes those varieties on which the leaves grow in a dense rosette. There are two subcategories—crisphead (commonly known as iceberg) and butterhead (the Bibb and Boston varieties).

HEARTS OF PALM

The edible inner portions of the stem of the cabbage palm tree, which is Florida's official state tree. Hearts of palm are slender, ivory-colored, and delicately flavored. They look like white asparagus without the tip. They are available fresh only in Florida; otherwise, you can find them canned in water at the supermarket. Use them in salads, main dishes, or serve them deep-fried.

HEAVY CREAM

Also known as whipping cream, is a rich dairy product with a butterfat content of at least 36 percent. For the best flavor and cooking properties, buy one hundred percent natural fresh cream with a short shelf life printed on the carton; avoid long-lasting varieties that have been processed by ultraheat methods. Heavy cream is also known as double cream.

HERITAGE TURKEY

Turkey which is related to old native non-hybrid turkeys, such as Bourbon Red, Narragansett and Standard Bronze. These turkeys are about 6 months old when brought to market. They have longer legs, less white meat, are more aerodynamic in shape and can fly. (different than wild turkey).

HOISIN SAUCE

Used as an ingredient or a seasoning, is a thick, reddish brown sauce of fermented soybeans or wheat, chiles, garlic, vinegar, sesame seeds, and Asian spices. Sold in bottles, it keeps indefinitely in the refrigerator or at room temperature.

HOLLANDAISE SAUCE

This smooth, rich, creamy sauce is generally used to embellish vegetables, fish and egg dishes, such as the classic Eggs Benedict. It's made with butter, egg yolks and lemon juice, usually in a double boiler to prevent overheating, and served warm.

HOMINY

Dried corn kernels that have been hulled and degermed, either mechanically or chemically, by soaking the corn in slaked lime or lye. It has a soft, chewy texture. Hominy is sold canned, ready to eat, or it can be purchased dried and must be reconstituted before using. It is served as a side dish or part of a casserole or soup. Ground hominy is called grits and is available in three grinds coarse, medium, and fine.

HONEY

Produced by bees from flower nectar, ranges from mild-flavored varieties, such as clover and orange, to more distinctively aromatic varieties, such as thyme. When measuring honey, oil the measuring cup or spoon to facilitate pouring.

HONEY MUSTARD

Made from prepared mustard, vinegar, honey and various herbs and spices.

HORS D'OEUVRE

Small savory appetizers served before the meal. They are usually one- or two-bite size and can be cold or hot. The word "hors d'oeuvre" is properly used for both the singular and plural forms. The reason is that the term translates literally as (dishes) "outside the work (meal)," and no matter how many dishes there are, there is only one "work." In today's modern parlance, however, the plural is often spoken and written as hors d'oeuvres.

HORSERADISH

A member of the mustard family, is a pungent, hot-tasting root sold fresh and whole, or grated and bottled as a prepared sauce. The best prepared horseradish is grated and bottled in a light vinegar.

HOT-PEPPER SAUCE

Used as an ingredient and as a seasoning, is made from hot fresh or dried red chiles, vinegar, and salt. Although many commercial brands are available, the best known is Tabasco, a trademarked product of the McIlhenny Company of Avery Island, Louisiana.

HUBBARD SQUASH

A very large winter squash with a thick, bumpy, hard shell ranging in color from dark green to bright orange. Hubbards are available from early September to March, either whole or, if extraordinarily large, cut into pieces. Look for those with clean-colored rinds free from blemishes. Store unwrapped in a cool (under 50°F) place (or in the refrigerator) up to 6 months. Hubbard squash is best boiled or baked. Because of its rather grainy texture, the yellow-orange flesh is often mashed or pureed and mixed with butter and seasonings before serving. Hubbard squash is an excellent source of vitamin A and contains a fair amount of iron and riboflavin.

I IDAHO POTATOES

Considered by many to be the best variety of America's most popular potato for baking, the russet. Though some russets grown elsewhere are commonly called Idaho potatoes, many Idaho government officials are pushing to make the name exclusive to spuds grown in local soil.

IRRADIATION

An FDA-approved process by which food is bombarded with low doses of high-frequency energy from gamma rays, X-rays or accelerated electrons. The purpose of this radiation is to extend shelf life by inhibiting maturation and decay through the elimination of microorganisms and insect invasion. Most foods processed with irradiation will last weeks instead of days. All irradiated foods must bear an international symbol—a plant within a broken circle. Exceptions to this rule are irradiated foods—such as spices and herbs—that are used as an ingredient in other food products. The jury is still out on the safety of irradiated foods. Of concern are potentially toxic elements that irradiation may produce in foods as well as the possible long-term side effects of eating these treated products. Proponents suggest that irradiation serves as a substitute for many questionable chemicals and preservatives now used in food processing. Those foods currently approved by the FDA for irradiation treatment are fruits, vegetables, dried spices, herbs, seasonings and teas, pork, white potatoes, wheat and wheat flours. Most food producers, however, have not taken advantage of that approval. Irish coffee this hot beverage blends strong coffee, Irish whiskey and a small amount of sugar. It's usually served in a glass mug and topped by a dollop of whipped cream.

ISRAELI COUSCOUS

Large even-sized pearls of toasted pasta. It can be found in specialty stores and in some supermarkets.

ITALIAN GREEN BEANS

Flavorful fresh green beans that are longer, wider, and flatter than most other varieties. They are also known as romano beans.

ITALIAN PARSLEY

Also known as flat leaf parsley, has a slightly peppery flavor and beautiful dark green color. More flavorful than its sibling curly parsley, Italian parsley can be used to garnish as well as add depth to a wide variety of dishes. Choose Italian parsley that is bright green and shows no signs of yellowing or wilting. Wash in cool water, shake of excess moisture, and wrap in paper towels. Store in refrigerator up to five days.

ITALIAN SAUSAGES

Fresh pork sausages that include those in the style of northern Italy, which are sweet and mild and sometimes flavored with fennel seed. Southern-style sausages, such as Neapolitan varieties, are often flavored with dried chili pepper flakes and tend to be hot.

J JALAPEÑO CHILI

Named after Jalapa, the capital of Veracruz, Mexico, these smooth, dark green (scarlet red when ripe) chilis range from hot to very hot. They have a rounded tip and are about 2 inches long and 3/4 to 1 inch in diameter. Besides their flavor, jalapeños are quite popular because they're so easily seeded (the seeds and veins are extremely hot). They're available fresh and canned and are used in a variety of sauces, sometimes stuffed with cheese, fish or meat, and in a multitude of dishes. In their dried form, jalapeños are known as chipotles.

JAMAICAN JERK SEASONING

A dry seasoning blend that originated on the Caribbean island after which it's named and which is used primarily in the preparation of grilled meat. The ingredients can vary depending on the cook, but Jamaican jerk blend is generally a combination of chiles, thyme, spices (such as cinnamon, ginger, allspice and cloves), garlic and onions. Jerk seasoning can be either rubbed directly onto meat or blended with a liquid to create a marinade. In the Caribbean, the most common meats seasoned in this fashion are pork and chicken. Such preparations are referred to as "jerk pork" and "jerk chicken."

JAMBALAYA

A versatile dish that combines cooked rice with a variety of ingredients, including tomatoes, onion, green peppers and almost any kind of meat, poultry or shellfish. The dish varies widely from cook to cook. It's thought that the name derives from the French jambon, meaning "ham," the main ingredient in many of the first jambalayas.

JELLY-ROLL PAN

A rectangular baking pan with about 1-inch-deep sides used to make sheet cakes or sponge cakes used for jelly rolls. These pans are usually 15-1/2 x 10-1/2 x 1-inch.

JÍCAMA

Often referred to as the Mexican potato, this large, bulbous root vegetable has a thin brown skin and white, crunchy flesh. Its sweet, nutty flavor is good both raw and cooked. Jícama is available from November through May and can be purchased in Mexican markets and most large supermarkets. It should be stored in the refrigerator in a plastic bag and will last for about 2 weeks. The thin skin should be peeled just before using. When cooked, jícama retains its crisp, water chestnut-type texture. It's a fair source of vitamin C.

JONATHAN APPLE

Bright red apple is to some just as seductive as its juicy, sweet-tart flavor. The Jonathan is in season from September through February. This all-purpose apple is great for out-of-hand eating and for pies, applesauce and other cooked dishes. It doesn't fare well, however, when used as a baking apple.

JULIENNE

Foods that have been cut into thin, matchstick strips. The food (such as a potato) is first cut into 1/8-inch-thick slices. The slices are stacked, then cut into 1/8-inch-thick strips. The strips may then be cut into whatever length is desired. If the object is round, cut a thin slice from the bottom so it will sit firmly and not roll on the work surface.

K KALAMATA OLIVE

(also spelled calamata) An almond-shaped Greek olive that ranges in length from about 1/2 to 1 inch. Kalamatas are a dark eggplant color and have a flavor that can be rich and fruity. They're often slit to allow the wine vinegar marinade in which they're soaked to penetrate the flesh. Kalamatas are marketed packed in either olive oil or vinegar.

KALE

Nonheading member of the cabbage family has been cultivated for over 2,000 years. Though it grows in warm climates, it's happiest in colder climates where for centuries its high vitamin content has made it particularly popular with northern Europeans. Kale has a mild cabbage flavor and comes in many varieties and colors. Most kale is easily identified by its frilly leaves arranged in a loose bouquet formation. The color of the leaves of the varieties most commonly available in the United States is deep green variously tinged with shades of blue or purple. There are ornamental varieties in gorgeous shades of lavender, purple and celadon green. Kale's best during the winter months, though it's available year-round in most parts of the country. Choose richly colored, relatively small bunches of kale, avoiding any with limp or yellowing leaves. Store in the coldest section of the refrigerator no longer than 2 or 3 days. After that, the flavor of kale becomes quite strong and the leaves limp. Because the center stalk is

KEBAB; KABOB

Small chunks of meat, fish or shellfish that are usually marinated before being threaded on a skewer and grilled over coals. Pieces of vegetables can also accompany the meat on the skewer. Also called shish kebab and shashlik.

KNEAD

A technique used to mix and work a dough in order to form it into a cohesive, pliable mass. During kneading, the network of gluten strands stretches and expands, thereby enabling a dough to hold in the gas bubbles formed by a leavener (which allows it to rise). Kneading is accomplished either manually or by machine—usually a large mixer equipped with a dough hook (some machines have two dough hooks) or a food processor with a plastic blade. By hand, kneading is done with a pressing-folding-turning action performed by pressing down into the dough with the heels of both hands, then pushing away from the body. The dough is folded in half and given a quarter turn, and the process is repeated. Depending on the dough, the manual kneading time can range anywhere from five to fifteen minutes (or more). Well-kneaded dough is smooth and elastic.

KOBE BEEF

An exclusive grade of beef from cattle raised in Kobe, Japan. These pampered cattle are massaged with sake and fed a special diet that includes plentiful amounts of beer. This specialized treatment results in beef that is extraordinarily tender and full-flavored. It also makes the beef extravagantly expensive, which is why it's rarely available in the United States.

KOSHER TURKEY

Turkey processed like all other commercial turkeys, except that they are salted after evisceration and chilled before packaging. The salting after slaughter draws out the blood, which makes the turkey comply with Jewish dietary laws. They are not more nutritious, do not contain less fat or cholesterol, and still have bacteria even though the salt kills some bacteria. The salt used in koshering may increase the sodium level, even though the birds are rinsed after salting. Since kosher turkeys are salted during processing, it is recommended to NOT brine them.

KUMQUAT

A tiny oval or round orange. It's cultivated in China, Japan, and the United States. The edible golden orange rind is sweet, while the rather dry flesh is very tart. The entire fruit—skin and flesh—is eaten, and very ripe fruit can be sliced and served raw in salads or as a garnish. The kumquat is more likely to be found cooked, however; either candied or pickled whole or in preserves or marmalades. Fresh kumquats are available from November to March. Look for firm fruit without blemishes. Refrigerate wrapped in a plastic bag for up to a month. Kumquats contain good amounts of potassium and vitamins A and C.

L LACTIC ACID

A bitter-tasting acid that forms when certain bacteria combine with lactose (milk sugar). Lactic acid is used to impart a tart flavor, as well as in the preservation of some foods. It occurs naturally in the souring of milk and can be found in foods such as cheese and yogurt.

LADYFINGER

A light, delicate sponge cake roughly shaped like a rather large, fat finger. It's used as an accompaniment to ice cream, puddings and other desserts. Ladyfingers are also employed as an integral part of some desserts. Ladyfingers can be made at home or purchased in bakeries or supermarkets.

LARD

Rendered and clarified pork fat, the quality of which depends on the area the fat came from and the method of rendering. The very best is leaf lard, which comes from the fat around the animal's kidneys. Unprocessed lard has quite a strong flavor and a soft texture. Lard can be processed in many ways, including filtering, bleaching, hydrogenation and emulsification. In general, processed lard is firmer, has a milder, more nutlike flavor and a longer shelf life. Lard is richer than many other fats and therefore makes extremely tender, flaky biscuits and pastries. It's a flavorful fat for frying and is widely used throughout South America and many European countries. When substituting lard for butter in baking, reduce the amount by twenty to twenty-five percent. All lard should be tightly wrapped to prevent absorption of other flavors. It may be stored at room temperature or in the refrigerator, depending on how it has been processed. Always check the label for storage directions.

LAVENDER

A relative of mint, this aromatic plant has violet flowers and green or pale gray leaves, both of which lend their bitter pungency to salads. The leaves may also be used to make herb tea.

LEAF LETTUCE

Any of several varieties of lettuce with leaves that branch from a single stalk in a loose bunch rather than forming a tight head. The leaves are crisper and more full-flavored than those of the head lettuce varieties. Depending on the variety, leaf lettuce can range in color from medium to dark green; some have red-tipped leaves. Among the more popular leaf lettuces are oak leaf, salad bowl, frilly red leaf and crinkly green leaf. In general, leaf lettuce is more perishable than head lettuce. Choose bunches with crisp, evenly colored leaves with no sign of wilting or yellowing at the edges. As with all greens, leaf lettuce should be washed and either drained completely or blotted with a paper towel to remove any excess moisture before being refrigerated in a plastic bag. It will keep this way up to about three days.

LEEK

Native to the Mediterranean countries, the leek has been prized by gourmets for thousands of years. Leeks still hold a flavorful spotlight in today's cuisine. Looking like a giant scallion, the leek is related to both the garlic and the onion, though its flavor and fragrance are milder and more subtle. It has a thick, white stalk that's cylindrical in shape and has a slightly bulbous root end. The broad, flat, dark green leaves wrap tightly around each other like a rolled newspaper. Leeks are available year-round in most regions. Choose those with crisp, brightly colored leaves and an unblemished white portion. Avoid any with withered or yellow-spotted leaves. The smaller the leek, the more tender it will be. Refrigerate leeks in a plastic bag up to 5 days. Before using, trim rootlets and leaf ends. Slit the leeks from top to bottom and wash thoroughly to remove all the dirt trapped between the leaf layers. Leeks can be cooked whole as a vegetable or chopped and used in salads, soups and a multitude of other dishes.

LEMON GRASS

One of the most important flavorings in Thai cooking, this herb has long, thin, gray-green leaves and a scallionlike base. Citral, an essential oil also found in lemon peel, gives lemon grass its sour-lemon flavor and fragrance. Lemon grass is available fresh or dried in Asian (particularly Thai) markets. It's used to make tea and to flavor soups and other dishes.

LENTIL

Popular in parts of Europe and a staple throughout much of the Middle East and India, this tiny, lens-shaped pulse has long been used as a meat substitute. There are three main varieties of lentils. The French or European lentil, sold with the seed coat on, has a grayish-brown exterior and a creamy yellow interior. The reddish orange Egyptian or red lentil is smaller, rounder and sans seed coat. There's also a yellow lentil. None of these varieties are used fresh but are dried as soon as they're ripe. The regular brown lentils are commonly found in supermarkets, while the red and yellow lentils, though available in some supermarkets, must usually be purchased in Middle Eastern or East Indian markets. Lentils should be stored airtight at room temperature and will keep up to a year. They can be used as a side dish (puréed, whole and combined with vegetables), in salads, soups and stews. Lentils have a fair amount of calcium and vitamins A and B and are a good source of iron and phosphorus.

LIMA BEAN

There are two distinct varieties of lima—the Fordhook and the baby lima (and Fordhooks are not adult baby limas). Both are pale green, plump-bodied and have a slight kidney-shape curve. The Fordhook is larger and plumper than the baby lima. It also has a fuller flavor than its smaller relative. Fresh limas are available from June to September. They're usually sold in their pods, which should be plump, firm and dark green. The pods can be refrigerated in a plastic bag for up to a week. They should be shelled just before using. Frozen lima beans are available year-round and are labeled according to variety (Fordhook or baby). Canned and dried limas are usually labeled "jumbo," "large," or "small," a designation that relates to size and not variety. In the South, dried limas are frequently referred to as butter beans. A traditional way to serve limas is with corn in succotash. They're also used alone as a side dish, in soups and sometimes in salads. Lima beans contain a good amount of protein, phosphorus, potassium and iron.

LIQUEURS

Are distinguished by being sweet and syrupy. Liqueurs were originally used (and some still are) as a digestive. They are now usually served after dinner but also play an important role in many cocktails. Liqueurs can also be used in cooking, particularly for desserts.

LONDON BROIL

A flank steak that has been cut into large pieces, tenderized by marinating, broiled or grilled, then thinly sliced across the grain.

LONGHORN CHEESE

Named after the longhorn cow, this cheese is a mild form of cheddar. It comes in cylinders and rectangles.

M MACE

This spice tastes and smells like a pungent version of nutmeg, and for a very good reason—mace is the bright red membrane that covers the nutmeg seed. After the membrane is removed and dried, it becomes a yellow-orange color. It's sold ground and, less frequently, whole (in which case it's called a "blade"). Mace is used to flavor all manner of foods, sweet to savory.

MACERATE

To soak a food (usually fruit) in a liquid in order to infuse it with the liquid's flavor. A spirit such as brandy, rum, or a liqueur is usually the macerating liquid.

MANDOLINE

A compact, hand-operated machine with various adjustable blades for thin to thick slicing and for julienne and french-fry cutting. Mandolines have folding legs and come in both wood and stainless steel-frame models. They're used to cut firm vegetables and fruits (such as potatoes and apples) with uniformity and precision.

MANGO

Fruit is cultivated in temperate climates around the world, including California and Florida. Mangoes grow in a wide variety of shapes (oblong, kidney and round) and sizes (from about 6 ounces to 4 pounds). Their thin, tough skin is green and, as the fruit ripens, becomes yellow with beautiful red mottling. The fragrant flesh is a brilliant golden orange, exceedingly juicy and exotically sweet and tart. Perhaps the only negative to the mango is the huge, flat seed that traverses its length. The fruit must be carefully carved away from the seed with a sharp knife. Mangoes are in season from May to September, though imported fruit is in the stores sporadically throughout the remainder of the year. Look for fruit with an unblemished, yellow skin blushed with red. Because the seed is so oversized, the larger the mango the higher the fruit-to- seed ratio. Underripe fruit can be placed in a paper bag at room temperature. Ripe mangoes can be placed in a plastic bag and held in the refrigerator for up to five days.

MARBLING

Flecks or thin streaks of fat that run throughout a piece of meat, enhancing its flavor, tenderness and juiciness.

MARGARINE

Developed in the late 1800s as a butter substitute, margarine (which is less expensive but not as flavorful as butter) is made with vegetable oils. In order for margarine to become solid, the oil must undergo a chemical transformation known as hydrogenation—indicated as hydrogenated (or partially hydrogenated) oils on a label. During hydrogenation, extra hydrogen atoms are pumped into unsaturated fat, a process that creates trans fatty acids and converts the mixture into a saturated fat, thereby obliterating any benefits it had as a polyunsaturate. Some researchers believe that hydrogenated oils may actually be more damaging than regular saturated fats for those limiting cholesterol in their diets, but the jury's still out on that debate. Those margarines lowest in cholesterol are made from a high percentage of polyunsaturated canola, safflower or corn oil. To make this butter substitute taste and look more like the real thing, cream or milk is often added. Food coloring, preservatives, emulsifiers and vitamins A and D are also common additives. Careful label scrutiny is advised because the ingredients affect everything from flavor to texture to nutritive value.

MARINADE

A seasoned liquid in which foods such as meat, fish and vegetables are soaked (marinated) in order to absorb flavor and, in some instances, to be tenderized. Most marinades contain an acid (lemon juice, vinegar or wine) and herbs or spices. The acid ingredient is especially important for tough cuts of meat because it serves as a tenderizer. Because most marinades contain acid ingredients, the marinating should be done in a glass, ceramic or stainless-steel container —never in aluminum.

MARINATE

To soak a food such as meat, fish or vegetables in a seasoned liquid mixture called a marinade. The purpose of marinating is for the food to absorb the flavors of the marinade or, as in the case of a tough cut of meat, to tenderize. Because most marinades contain acid ingredients, the marinating should be done in a glass, ceramic or stainless-steel container—never in aluminum. Foods should be covered and refrigerated while they're marinating.

MARROW

A soft, fatty tissue found in the hollow center of an animal's leg bones and, though not as plentiful, in the spinal bones. It isn't widely consumed in the United States, but marrow is considered a delicacy by many Europeans and is the highlight of the famous Milanese specialty Osso Bucco. Marrowbones (those that contain marrow) can be purchased at meat markets and most supermarkets (though special ordering may be necessary). They should be wrapped, refrigerated and used within a day or two of purchase. Marrow is extremely light and digestible. It can be cooked in the bone (and removed afterwards) or it may be removed first and cooked separately. The common methods of preparation are baking or poaching, after which the marrow is often spread on toast and served as an appetizer. A special long, narrow utensil called a marrow spoon or scoop can be used to extract the marrow from the bone. Marrow is also added to soups for body and flavor. It has the same calorie count as beef fat and contains a small amount of protein.

MEASURING CUPS

Containers that come in graduated sizes, used to measure amounts of food. Dry measuring cups come in nested sets that can include 2-cup, 1-cup, 1/2-cup, 1/3-cup, 1/4-cup and 1/8-cup (2-tablespoon) sizes. The dry ingredient can either be stirred first (as with flour and confectioners' sugar) or simply spooned lightly into the cup, then leveled off with the straight edge of a knife. Brown sugar and shortening should be packed tightly into the cup before being leveled off. For foods such as coconut, nuts and chocolate chips, the cups should be filled, then leveled off with your fingers. Liquid measuring cups range in size from 1 to 4 cups. To use, simply pour in liquid and read measurement at eye level.

MEAT THERMOMETER

A tool to read the temperature of meat in order to ascertain when it has reached the desired degree of doneness. The dials on meat thermometers not only indicate the temperature, but some also have a scale indicating at what degree each type of meat (beef, lamb, pork, etc.) is done. A thermometer can be inserted at the beginning of the cooking time and left in throughout the duration. There are also instant thermometers that take the reading in just a few seconds; these are inserted into the meat toward the end of the cooking time. Meat thermometers come with 1- or 2-inch dials, usually measuring from 0°F (sometimes 100°F) to 220°F. Look for those with thin probes, which make smaller holes in the meat and therefore allow less juices to escape. Always insert a meat thermometer as near to the center of the meat as possible, avoiding bone or gristle areas.

MINCEMEAT

A rich, spicy preserve made of fruit (usually chopped cherries, dried apricots, apples or pears, raisins and candied citrus peel), nuts, beef suet, various spices and brandy or rum. Old-time mincemeats included minced, cooked lean meat (usually beef)—hence the name. Most modern versions do not use meat. The ingredients are combined, then covered and allowed to mature for a month for the flavors to mingle and mellow. Commercially prepared mincemeat is available in jars in most supermarkets, particularly around Thanksgiving and Christmas. Mincemeat can be used in many dishes including pies, tarts, puddings and cookies.

MOCHA

A hot coffee-and-chocolate beverage. This flavor combination is also used in desserts, icings, candies and sweet sauces.

MONOSODIUM GLUTAMATE; MSG

Commonly known as MSG, this white crystalline powder is derived from glutamic acid, one of the 22 amino acids. This natural amino acid is found in seaweed, vegetables, cereal gluten and the residue of sugar beets. Even though it has no pronounced flavor of its own, monosodium glutamate has the ability to intensify the flavor of savory foods. Some people have reactions to MSG that cause them to suffer from a variety of maladies, including dizziness, headache, flushing and burning sensations. MSG is found in the spice section of supermarkets either as monosodium glutamate, MSG, or under brand names such as Ac'cent. Many seasoning mixes also contain MSG. Additionally, it's present in many processed foods such as snack foods, frozen entrées, salad dressings and soups. Be aware that many ingredients naturally contain MSG but are not required by the Food and Drug Administration to be labeled as such.

N NEUFCHÂTEL CHEESE

The French original, hailing from the town of Neufchâtel in the region of Normandy, is a soft, white, unripened cheese. When young, its flavor is slightly salty but delicate and mild. After ripening, Neufchâtel becomes more pungent. It's made from cows' milk and the milk fat content varies widely (from 20 to 45 percent). Neufchâtel is available in a variety of shapes—square, rectangular, cylindrical and the special heart-shape variety called Coeur de Bray. In the U.S., it is a lower fat cream cheese.

NUTMEG

The seed from the nutmeg tree (a tropical evergreen) was extremely popular throughout much of the world from the 15th to the 19th centuries. When the fruit of the tree is picked, it is split to reveal the nutmeg seed surrounded by a lacy membrane that, when dried and ground, becomes the spice mace. The hard, egg-shaped nutmeg seed is grayish-brown and about 1 inch long. The flavor and aroma are delicately warm, spicy and sweet. Nutmeg is sold ground or whole. Whole nutmeg freshly ground with a nutmeg grater is superior to that which is commercially ground and packaged. Nutmeg is excellent when used in baked goods, milk- or cream-based preparations like custards, white sauces or eggnog and on fruits and vegetables—particularly potatoes, spinach and squash.

O OATS

According to a definition in Samuel Johnson's 1755 Dictionary of the English Language, oats were "a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but which in Scotland supports the people." Since oats are by far the most nutritious of the cereal grasses, it would appear that the Scots were ahead of the rest of us. Today, whole oats are still used as animal fodder. Humans don't usually consume them until after the oats have been cleaned, toasted, hulled and cleaned again, after which time they become oat groats (which still contain most of the original nutrients). Oat groats can be cooked and served as cereal, or prepared in the same manner as rice and used as a side dish or in a dish such as a salad or stuffing. When steamed and flattened with huge rollers, oat groats become regular rolled oats (also called old-fashioned oats). They take about 15 minutes to cook. Quick-cooking rolled oats are groats that have been cut into several pieces before being steamed and rolled into thinner flakes. Though they cook in about 5 minutes, many think the flavor and texture are never quite as satisfying as with regular rolled oats. Old-fashioned oats and quick-cooking oats can usually be interchanged in recipes. Instant oats, however, are not interchangeable because they're made with cut groats that have been precooked and dried before being rolled. This precooking process so softens the oat pieces that, after being combined with a liquid, the mixture can turn baked goods such as muffins or cookies into gooey lumps. Most instant oatmeal is packaged with salt, sugar and other flavorings. Scotch oats or steel-cut oats or Irish oatmeal are all names for groats that have been cut into two to three pieces and not rolled. They take considerably longer to cook than rolled oats and have a decidedly chewy texture. Oat flour is made from groats that have been ground into powder. It contains no gluten, however, so for baked goods that need to rise, like yeast breads must be combined with a flour that does. Oat bran is the outer casing of the oat and is particularly high in soluble fiber, thought to be a leading contender in the fight against high cholesterol. Oat bran, groats, flour and Scotch oats are more likely to be found in health-food stores than supermarkets. Oats are high in vitamin B-1 and contain a good amount of vitamins B-2 and E.

O'BRIEN POTATOES

The dish consists of diced potatoes (sometimes precooked) that are fried with chopped onions and pimientos until the potatoes are crisp and brown. Some variations use sweet red or green peppers instead of pimientos.

OKRA

The green okra pods have a ridged skin and a tapered, oblong shape. Although available fresh year-round in the South, the season for the rest of the country is from about May through October. When buying fresh okra, look for firm, brightly colored pods under 4 inches long. Larger pods may be tough and fibrous. Avoid those that are dull in color, limp or blemished. Refrigerate okra in a plastic bag for up to three days. Canned and frozen okra is also available. These green pods can be prepared in a variety of ways including braising, baking and frying. When cooked, okra gives off a rather viscous substance that serves to thicken any liquid in which it is cooked. Throughout the South, it's a favorite ingredient in many dishes, the best known being gumbo, where it's used both for thickening and for flavor. Fresh okra contains fair amounts of vitamins A and C.

OLIVE OIL

Pressing tree-ripened olives extracts a flavorful, monounsaturated oil that is prized throughout the world both for cooking (particularly in Mediterranean countries) and for salads. Today's marketplace provides a wide selection of domestic olive oil (most of which comes from California) and imported oils from France, Greece, Italy and Spain. The flavor, color and fragrance of olive oils can vary dramatically depending on distinctions such as growing region and the crop's condition. All olive oils are graded in accordance with the degree of acidity they contain. The best are cold-pressed, a chemical-free process that involves only pressure, which produces a natural level of low acidity. Extra virgin olive oil, the cold-pressed result of the first pressing of the olives, is only 1 percent acid. It's considered the finest and fruitiest of the olive oils and is therefore also the most expensive. Extra virgin olive oil can range from a crystalline champagne color to greenish-golden to bright green. In general, the deeper the color, the more intense the olive flavor. After extra virgin, olive oils are classified in order of ascending acidity. Virgin olive oil is also a first-press oil, with a slightly higher level of acidity of between 1 to 3 percent. Fino olive oil is a blend of extra virgin and virgin oils. Products labeled simply olive oil contain a combination of refined olive oil and virgin or extra virgin oil. The new light olive oil contains the same amount of beneficial monounsaturated fat as regular olive oil, and it also has exactly the same number of calories. What the term "light" refers to is that, because of an extremely fine filtration process, this olive oil is lighter in both color and fragrance, and has little of the classic olive-oil flavor. It's this rather nondescript flavor that makes "light" olive oil perfect for baking and cooking where regular olive oil's obvious essence might be undesirable. Olive oil should be stored in a cool, dark place for up to 6 months. It can be refrigerated, in which case it will last up to a year. Chilled olive oil becomes cloudy and too thick to pour. However, it will clear and become liquid again when brought to room temperature.

ORGANIC TURKEY

Turkeys raised without antibiotics or growth hormones and given access to the outdoors. They are also given feed that meets the organic standards. Finally, before being labeled organic, the farm and company handling the food must be certified as meeting USDA organic standards. Organic food differs from conventionally processed food in the way it is grown, handled and processed.

OREGANO

This herb belongs to the mint family and is related to both marjoram and thyme. Oregano is similar to marjoram but is not as sweet and has a stronger, more pungent flavor and aroma. Because of its pungency, it requires a bit more caution in its use. Mediterranean oregano is milder than the Mexican variety, which is generally used in highly spiced dishes. Fresh Mediterranean or European oregano is sometimes available in gourmet produce sections of supermarkets and in Italian or Greek markets. Choose bright green, fresh-looking bunches with no sign of wilting or yellowing. Refrigerate in a plastic bag for up to 3 days. Dried Mediterranean oregano is readily available in any supermarket in both crumbled and powdered forms. The stronger-flavored Mexican oregano can generally be found in its dried form in Latin markets. As with all dried herbs, oregano should be stored in a cool, dark place for no more than 6 months. Oregano goes extremely well with tomato-based dishes and is a familiar pizza herb.

ORGANIC FOOD

Food that is cultivated and/or processed without the use of chemicals of any sort, including fertilizers, insecticides, artificial coloring or flavoring and additives. Although consumers assume that foods labeled organic are as pure as possible, the truth is that while many states have their own organic food laws, there are no consistent regulations guiding and/or governing the standards of organic food producers. This means that chemical crosscontamination (through shipping, wind, water leeching, etc.) is, with some growers and shippers, a possibility. In 1990, Congress passed the Federal Organic Foods Production Act, which called for national organic food guidelines, including certification of growers and standards for organic food production, monitoring crops for chemical contamination and livestock for living conditions and screening organic imports. At this writing, however, this Act has yet to go into effect. That same year (1990), California, long at the vanguard of the organic food movement, established the United States' toughest state food standards with its California Organic Food Act, which goes so far as to inspect produce on market shelves. Until the Federal Organic Foods Production Act is implemented, the consumer's best safeguard for reliable organic food is to buy from a reputable purveyor.

ORZO

In Italian this means "barley," but it's actually a tiny, rice-shaped pasta slightly smaller than a pine nut. Orzo is ideal for soups and wonderful when served as a substitute for rice.

P**PAELLA**

A Spanish dish of saffron-flavored rice combined with a variety of meats and shellfish (such as shrimp, lobster, clams, chicken, pork, ham and chorizo), garlic, onions, peas, artichoke hearts and tomatoes. It's named after the special two-handed pan—also called paella—in which it's prepared and served. The pan is wide, shallow and 13 to 14 inches in diameter.

PAN-BROIL; PANBROIL

To cook meats or fish quickly in a heavy, ungreased (or lightly greased) frying pan over high heat. Drippings are poured off as they form.

PANCETTA

A mild, spicy-sweet Italian-style bacon cured with salt and pepper, most commonly found unsmoked. Smoked pancetta, also available, is found at Italian delicatessens. Pancetta is sold flat or rolled into a large sausage shape.

PAPAYA

A tropical fruit shaped like a large pear or avocado, with a smooth, yellow skin and soft, sweet orange flesh that is milder tasting than a mango. Other shapes and colors of papaya are also grown. Halve a papaya lengthwise and scoop out shiny black seeds before peeling.

PAPRIKA

A powdered reddish brown spice derived from the dried paprika pepper. It is available in sweet, mild, and hot forms. Sweet or hot Hungarian paprika is more pungent than the mild Spanish type.

PARSLEY

Is a bright green herb, used as both a seasoning and a garnish, which adds a clean, fresh flavor and a decorative color to almost any dish. This fresh herb is available in two varieties: a curly-leaf type, which has a mild taste, and a flat-leaf type, known as Italian parsley, which resembles cilantro and has a more pronounced pungency than the curly-leaf variety. Select healthy, fresh-looking bunches with bright green color. Before storing, rinse and shake dry, wrap in paper towels, enclose in a plastic bag, and refrigerate for up to 1 week. Although dried parsley is available, the fresh herb is preferred.

PARSNIPS

Are root vegetables that are similar in shape and texture to carrots. Their ivory flesh has an appealingly sweet flavor. Unlike carrots, the flesh is always eaten cooked. Choose firm, small-to-medium uniformly shaped roots without cracks or brown patches. Store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 10 days.

PASTRY FLOUR

Has a protein level of 9%-10% compared to the 12%-13% found in bread flour. There are four primary types of wheat flours used in baking, and they vary in the amount of protein they contain. When moisture is added to the flour, a protein called gluten is developed and depending on the finished product, different amounts of this protein are desired. Since protein gives structure and strength to baked goods, most pastries require a limited amount. Lower levels of protein are found in a softer flour such as pastry flour, whereas the structure of bread demands a higher level.

PATTYPAN SQUASH

Are round, flattened summer squash characterized by their scalloped edge and pale green color. Choose squash that are heavy for their size and do not have cracks or bruises. Store in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

PEANUT OIL

An all-purpose oil derived from peanuts, is pale gold and subtly flavored with the richness of peanuts. It can be heated to high temperatures without smoking, which makes it suitable for deep-frying and sautéing.

PEARL BARLEY

Whole kernels of the mild-tasting grain that have been polished four to six times, resulting in a smooth surface and a pearl-like, lustrous gray finish. This polishing makes the grain easier to cook and digest. Available in regular and quick-cooking forms for use in soups, pilafs and casseroles.

PEARL ONIONS

Tiny white onions about 3/4 inch (2 cm) in diameter, added whole to stews and other dishes. They are also known as pickling onions. To peel pearl onions: Using a small, sharp knife, trim off the root ends. Cut a shallow X in each trimmed end to keep the onions whole during cooking. In a saucepan, combine the pearl onions with plenty of water to cover. Bring to a boil; boil for about 2 minutes, then drain. When the onions are cool enough to handle, slip off the skins by squeezing gently with your fingers.

PEARS

Subtly sweet and aromatic fruits. Varieties sold fresh include the spicy, smooth-textured Anjou; the fine-textured, mild Bartlett; the juicy Comice; and the slightly grainy, acidic Bosc. Ripe pears are firm but yield to fingertip pressure. Pears are also sold canned.

PECANS

Brown-skinned, crinkly nuts with a distinctive sweet, rich flavor and a crisp, slightly crumbly texture. They are sold whole (in the shell or shelled) and in halves or pieces. To toast pecans: Spread the nuts on a baking sheet and place in a preheated 325°F oven. Toast, shaking the sheet occasionally, until the nuts just begin to change color and are fragrant, 5-10 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool to room temperature. To chop pecans: Spread the pecans on a work surface and, using a chef's knife, chop with a rocking motion. Or chop the nuts in a food processor fitted with the metal blade; do not overprocess or the nuts will turn into a paste.

PEPPER

The most common of all savory spices is best freshly ground or coarsely cracked or crushed from whole peppercorns. Already ground pepper, black or white, is sold in grocery stores.

PEPPERCORNS

The berries from a vine used whole or ground as a spice. Black peppercorns, which have the most pungent flavor, are picked slightly underripe, and their hulls oxidize as they dry. Milder white peppercorns are fully ripened berries, husked before drying. Sharp-tasting unripened green peppercorns are sold in water, pickled in brine, or dried. Brine-packed peppercorns should be rinsed before using. Peppercorns can be ground in a pepper mill or crushed coarsely with a mortar and pestle.

PESTO

A traditional Italian sauce made of pureDed basil, garlic, pine nuts, Parmesan cheese, and olive oil. Traditionally tossed with pasta, it is sometimes used as a seasoning for other dishes. Ready-made pesto is available in well-stocked grocery stores and specialty food shops, or can be made by the home cook.

PHYLLO

Refers to tissue-thin sheets of flour-and-water dough, generally measuring 10 by 14 inches, used as wrappers for savory or sweet fillings. The name derives from the Greek word for "leaf." Sold fresh or frozen, the pastry sheets must be separated and handled carefully to avoid tearing. Be sure to thaw frozen phyllo in the refrigerator before use. When working with phyllo, keep those sheets you are not handling at the moment well covered to prevent them from drying out.

PINE NUTS

Small, ivory-colored seeds extracted from the cones of a species of pine tree. They are appreciated for their rich, slightly resinous flavor. Pine nuts are used whole as an ingredient or a garnish, or are pureified as a thickener. To toast pine nuts: Spread the nuts on a baking sheet and place in a preheated 325°F oven. Toast, shaking the sheet occasionally, until the nuts just begin to change color and are fragrant, about 3 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool to room temperature.

PINTO BEANS

Full-flavored, mealy-textured beans with distinctively mottled brown-and- tan skins. Their name means "painted." Pinto beans are available dried and precooked in cans. Similarly patterned cranberry beans can be substituted. Dried beans require soaking to rehydrate them.

PISTACHIOS

Slightly sweet, full-flavored nuts with distinctively green, crunchy meat. They are sold whole in the shell or shelled and unsalted or salted.

PITA BREAD

Also called pocket bread, is a flat unleavened bread made from whole-wheat or white flour. These rounds can be cut in half and stuffed with savory fillings.

PLANTAIN

Large banana variety often referred to as a cooking banana. Commonly used in Mexican and Caribbean cooking.

PLUM TOMATOES

Also called Roma tomatoes, are egg-shaped tomatoes available year-round in most grocery stores. They are canned whole in their juice, sometimes with a fresh basil leaf added for flavor. Imported Italian plum tomatoes are the most flavorful.

POBLANO CHILIS

Moderately mild, dark green chiles that resemble a tapered, triangular bell pepper. Large and broad in shape, these fresh chiles are up to 5 inches long and 3 inches wide.

POLENTA

Is an Italian term that refers to a specially ground cornmeal and to the dish into which it is made. The cornmeal is cooked and often enriched with butter, cream, cheese, or eggs. Cold polenta can be shaped and grilled.

POMEGRANATES

Fruits shaped like large oranges, have leathery red skin concealing hundreds of ruby red seeds resembling small corn kernels. The juicy, sweet seeds are eaten on their own, used as a garnish, or squeezed to yield a juice. To seed a pomegranate: Trim away the blossom end. Make a few shallow slashes in the skin. Soak the fruit in cold water for 5 minutes. With the fruit submerged, break it apart with your hands, separating the seeds from the membranes. The seeds will sink; drain and gently dry with paper towels.

PORTOBELLO MUSHROOMS

Are mature cremini mushrooms noted for their rich flavor and meaty texture. The wide, flat, deep brown caps grow as large as 5 inches (13 cm) in diameter. Select firm, plump mushrooms that are not slimy or bruised. Store mushrooms unwashed, lightly wrapped in paper towels or in a paper bag (never in plastic) in the refrigerator.

POTATO STARCH

Also known as potato flour, is fine-textured flour ground from potatoes that have been cooked and dried.

POULT

A baby turkey, which is tan and brown.

POWDERED SUGAR

Also known as confectioners' or icing sugar, is a finely pulverized sugar that dissolves quickly and is often used to provide a thin, white decorative coating. To prevent it from absorbing moisture in the air and caking, manufacturers often add a little cornstarch. Store sugar indefinitely in an airtight container.

PROSCIUTTO

Italian-style raw ham, a specialty of Parma, cured by dry-salting for one month, followed by air-drying in cool curing sheds for half a year or longer. It is usually cut into tissue-thin slices that highlight its intense flavor and deep pink color. The slices are enjoyed on their own or are heated or cooked as part of a recipe. Prosciutto di Parma, imported from Italy, is regarded as the best quality. Refrigerate prosciutto, well wrapped, for several weeks.

PUFF PASTRY

A light, flaky pastry made by repeatedly layering dough and butter or another solid fat to form a thin dough that puffs in the oven. Although many types of puff pastry have been made by hand in France for centuries, commercially manufactured frozen varieties are now also available.

PUMPKIN PIE SPICE

A special blend of spices that enhances the flavoring of pumpkin pie. The blend is usually made of cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg, ginger powder, mace, and cloves.

PUMPKINS

Large, round winter squashes with orange skins and flesh. The variety known as the sugar pumpkin has sweet flesh. It is commonly used in baking but is also used in savory dishes. Canned pumpkin puree is widely available and can easily be made from fresh pumpkin.

Q**QUICK BREAD**

Bread that is quick to make because it doesn't require kneading or rising time. That's because the leavener in such a bread is usually baking powder or baking soda, which, when combined with moisture, starts the rising process immediately. In the case of double-acting baking powder, oven heat causes a second burst of rising power. Eggs can also be used to leaven quick breads. This genre includes most biscuits, muffins, popovers and a wide variety of sweet and savory loaf breads.

QUICHE

Dish that consists of a pastry shell filled with a savory custard made of eggs, cream, seasonings and various other ingredients such as onions, mushrooms, ham, shellfish or herbs. The most notable of these savory pies is the quiche Lorraine, which has crisp bacon bits (and sometimes Gruyere cheese) added to the custard filling.

QUINCES

The yellowish green fruits of a tree originating in Asia but grown throughout the Mediterranean. Resembling lumpy pears, quinces have a hard, harshly acidic flesh that becomes delicate and sweet when cooked.

QUINOA

Ancient grain that was grown by the Incas and is rich in nutrients, especially amino acids. The small, pale grains expand and become tender when cooked and have a pleasantly earthy taste. Quinoa is sold in health-food stores and well-stocked grocery stores.

R**RADICCHIO**

A leaf vegetable related to Belgian endive, used raw in salads or in cooked dishes. The most common variety has a spherical head, reddish purple leaves with creamy white ribs and a mildly bitter flavor. It is also called red chicory.

RAGOUT

A thick, rich, well-seasoned stew of meat, poultry or fish that can be made with or without vegetables.

RAMEKIN

An individual baking dish (3 to 4 inches in diameter) that resembles a miniature souffle dish. Ramekins are usually made of porcelain or earthenware and can be used for both sweet and savory dishes, either baked or chilled.

RATATOUILLE

A popular dish from the French region of Provence that combines eggplant, tomatoes, onions, bell peppers, zucchini, garlic and herbs all simmered in olive oil. The vegetables can vary according to the cook. They can be cooked together or separately and then combined and heated briefly together. Ratatouille can be served hot, cold, or at room temperature, either as a side dish or as an appetizer with bread or crackers.

RAW SUGAR

Not true raw sugar, but a partially refined, coarse, brownish product that contains the natural molasses present in sugarcane. Store indefinitely in an airtight container.

RED BEANS

Small beans with brownish red skins and a slightly sweet flavor. They are available dried or precooked in cans. Dried beans require soaking to rehydrate them.

RED CURRANT JELLY

A translucent mixture made from cooked red currants (gooseberry family), sugar and pectin.

RED ONIONS

Also called Spanish onions, are medium to large onions that have purplish red skins and red-tinged white flesh with a mild, sweet flavor.

RED PEPPER FLAKES

Coarsely ground flakes of dried red chilis, including seeds, that have a moderately hot flavor and are used as a seasoning.

RED POTATOES

Medium-sized tuberous vegetables with thin red skins and crisp, waxy- textured white flesh. They are good steamed, boiled, or roasted. Choose firm, well-shaped potatoes without sprouts or a greenish cast. Store in a dark, dry place for several weeks.

RED WINE VINEGAR

Made from red wine, is more robust and pungent than vinegar made from white wine.

REDUCE

To boil a liquid (usually stock, wine or a sauce mixture) rapidly until the volume is reduced by evaporation, thereby thickening the consistency and intensifying the flavor. Such a mixture is sometimes referred to as a reduction.

REFRIED BEANS

A popular Mexican specialty also known by their Mexican name frijoles refritos. Refried beans are prepared with cooked red beans or pinto beans that are mashed, then fried, often in some type of fat or lard.

RHUBARB

A perennial plant with large, long stalks ranging in color from greenish pink to dark red. Although a vegetable, rhubarb is eaten as a fruit, cooked and sweetened with sugar. It is also called pieplant because the slender stalks make a delicious pie filling. Discard the leaves and roots, which can be toxic. Select crisp, firm young stalks and store them, wrapped, in the refrigerator, for up to 1 week.

RICE VINEGAR

A specialty of Japan, is made from rice wine. It is available natural and sweetened. It is used Japanese and Chinese recipes.

RICOTTA CHEESE

A light-textured, mild fresh Italian cheese with a soft texture, made from twice-cooked milk, traditionally sheep's milk, although cow's milk ricotta is far more common. Whole milk or part-skim products are available, sold in small tubs in most grocery stores. For best quality, seek out fresh ricotta, found in Italian delicatessens.

RISOTTO

An Italian rice specialty made by stirring hot stock into a mixture of rice (and often chopped onions) that has been sauteed in butter. The stock is added 1/2 cup at a time and the mixture is stirred continually while it cooks until all the liquid is absorbed before more stock is added. This labor-intensive technique results in rice that is delectably creamy while the grains remain separate and firm. Risottos can be flavored variously with ingredients such as chicken, shellfish, sausage, vegetables, cheese, white wine and herbs.

ROASTING RACK

A slightly raised rack—usually made of stainless steel—that elevates meat above the pan in which it's roasting. This prevents the meat from cooking in any drippings and allows adequate air circulation for even cooking and browning. Roasting racks can be flat, V- shaped or adjustable so they can be used either way.

ROMA TOMATO

Also known as a pear or paste tomato, is widely grown throughout Mexico and the U.S. Its distinct and compact oval shape is available in both yellow and red and it is known for its firmness. It has fewer seeds and less juice than other tomatoes and is often used in tomato based sauces due to its full flavor. Ripe tomatoes should be stored at room temperature and never refrigerated. Chilling a tomato not only changes the texture from firm to pulpy, it also changes the flavor. Refrigeration causes the sugars to convert to starch, reducing the flavor by 30% or more. Tomatoes are an excellent source of potassium and vitamins C and A.

ROMAINE

Lettuce grows in a long head of sturdy leaves that have a firm rib down their centers. It is cultivated as green, red and baby romaine is available as well. This is the classic lettuce choice for Caesar salad. It is found throughout the U.S. and should be refrigerated at a very cold temperature to retain its crispness.

ROSE WATER

Simply water that has been flavored with roses by distillation of rose petals. It is used in Middle Eastern cooking and baking. Look for this in Greek or Middle Eastern markets.

ROSEMARY

A Mediterranean herb with a strong, aromatic flavor, used to season, meat, poultry, and vegetables. It is sold as fresh sprigs or dried leaves. Store fresh rosemary in the refrigerator, wrapped in paper towels and enclosed in a plastic bag. Dried rosemary, found with other seasonings in all supermarkets, should be stored away from light, heat, and moisture for up to 1 year. Crush dried rosemary in the palm of the hand to release its flavor.

ROUX

A mixture of flour and fat that, after being slowly cooked over low heat, is used to thicken mixtures such as soups and sauces. There are three classic roux—white, blond and brown. The color and flavor is determined by the length of time the mixture is cooked. Both white roux and blond roux are made with butter. The former is cooked just until it begins to turn beige and the latter until pale golden. Both are used to thicken cream and white sauces and light soups. The fuller-flavored brown roux can be made with butter, drippings or pork or beef fat. It's cooked to a deep golden brown and used for rich, dark soups and sauces.

RUSSET POTATO

One of the most popular potatoes, and also known as a Burbank potato, this is oblong in shape with brown skin and white interior. These potatoes can weigh more than a pound each and are best when prepared by baking or boiling. Potatoes are a good source of carbohydrate, potassium and vitamin C. Recommended storage: 45o-50oF. Keep cool, dry and dark. Potatoes exposed to light or stored in extremes of temperature (cold or hot) can develop elevated levels of a naturally occurring alkaloid called solanin. Its presence can be detected by green coloration. Cutting away the green spots removes most of this substance, which can be toxic.

RUTABAGAS

Root vegetables that resemble a large turnip and have sweet, pale yellow- orange flesh and tan, green, or purple skin. They are also known as swedes or Swedish turnips. The sweetest rutabagas are no more than 3 or 4 inches (7.5 or 10 cm) in diameter and should be firm and heavy for their size. Store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 1 month.

S SAFFLOWER OIL

A clear, almost flavorless oil made from the seeds of safflowers. The oil is high in polyunsaturated fat. It is commonly used in salad dressings because it doesn't solidify when chilled. Safflower is also good for deep frying due to its high smoke point.

SAFFRON

An intensely aromatic spice, golden orange in color, made from the dried stigmas of a species of crocus. One pound of the world's costliest spice requires at least 225,000 stigmas; only a small amount of saffron is used to perfume and impart a golden hue to dishes in which it is used. Saffron is sold as threads (the dried stigmas) or in powdered form; the threads stay pungent longer than the powder. The best is Spanish saffron and is labeled "pure." For the most flavor, the threads or powder should be steeped in hot liquid.

SAGE

An herb with gray-green leaves that have a slightly bitter flavor and a distinctive aroma. It is widely used with lamb, poultry, pork, and veal, and is a staple seasoning for sausage. It is sold as fresh sprigs or dried leaves. Store fresh sage in the refrigerator, wrapped in paper towels and enclosed in a plastic bag. Dried sage, found with other seasonings in all supermarkets, should be stored away from light, heat, and moisture for up to 1 year. Crush dried sage in the palm of the hand to release its flavor.

SALT PORK

A form of salt-cured slab bacon consisting largely of pork fat, used as an enrichment and seasoning in traditional savory dishes. It is available in well-stocked food stores and butcher shops.

SAVOY CABBAGE

A flavorful, firm, round variety of cabbage with dark green leaves. The outermost ones are curled and marked by a fine lacy pattern of veins.

SCALLIONS

Also known as green onions, and refer to a distinct variety of immature onions. The vegetable has a white base that has not fully developed into a bulb and green leaves that are long and straight. Both parts are edible. Store in the refrigerator, wrapped for up to 5 days. They can be eaten raw or cooked in numerous dishes from soups to salads.

SEA SALT

Has been used through the ages and is the result of the evaporation of sea water. It comes in fine-grained or larger crystals.

SELF-RISING FLOUR

Generally an all purpose flour to which a leavening agent has been added in the form of baking powder and salt. This is the type of flour used in many packaged mixes such as cake batters. A substitute for one cup of self rising flour may be made if necessary using one cup of all-purpose + 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder + 1/2 teaspoons salt.

SERRANO CHILIS

Small and slender, up to 2 inches (5 cm) long and about 1/2 inch (12 mm) wide. These fresh green or red chiles are about as spicy as jalapenos, which are notably sharper and very hot. They are also sold in their ripened red form and pickled in brine. The name translates as "mountain" chili.

SESAME OIL

A cold-pressed oil made from untoasted sesame seeds. Asian sesame oil, from China and Japan, is made from roasted seeds and has an amber color and a full, rich flavor. Its low smoking temperature makes it unsuitable for using alone for cooking; it is used almost exclusively as a seasoning.

SHALLOT

The small member of the onion family, with papery brown skin, purple-tinged white flesh, and a flavor resembling a cross between sweet onion and garlic. Look for firm, well-shaped heads that are not sprouting. Store in a cool, dry place for up to 1 month. Shallots pickled in vinegar figure prominently in Asian recipes.

SHERBET

Made from unsweetened fruit juice and water. It is similar to sorbet except that it can contain milk, cream, egg whites or gelatin. Sherbet is lighter than ice cream but richer than an ice or sorbet.

SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS

Meaty-flavored Asian mushrooms that have flat, dark brown caps usually 2-3 inches in diameter. The tough, thin stems are usually trimmed off and discarded. Shiitakes are available fresh or dried. When selecting fresh shiitakes, look for firm, plump mushrooms that are not slimy or bruised. Store unwashed, lightly wrapped in paper towels or in a paper bag (never in plastic) in the refrigerator. Dried mushrooms can be stored indefinitely.

SHORTBREAD

A rich crumbly cookie made of butter, flour, and sugar. The classic way of making shortbread is to press the dough into flat decorative molds and cut it into wedges after baking.

SMOKED SALMON

A form of salmon that is heat-smoked over aromatic woods to give it a distinctive smoky flavor and a delicate texture. Smoked lox, which is salt-cured, and Nova, which is cold-smoked, have oilier textures and in most cases are not acceptable substitutes.

SMOKING POINT

Referred to in the heating of cooking oils as an indicator of an oil's ability to withstand high temperature. At the smoking point, an oil begins to break down, emitting a gas and various byproducts, some of which contribute off-flavors to the oil. Oils with higher smoking points are desirable for deep fat frying, such as peanut oil and corn oil. Fats which have been previously used for deep frying have a lower smoking point the second time because the break-down has already begun. Mustard oil is the exception to the rule in terms of a flavor change after the smoking point is reached. Mustard oil achieves a more desirable flavor after heating to the smoking point.

SNOW PEAS

Also called mangetouts, are a flat pods containing tiny, immature peas. They do not require shelling, but larger pods may need the strings removed. Choose crisp pods with bright green color and refrigerate in a plastic bag for up to 3 days.

SORBET

French for "sherbet," is a smooth, soft frozen dish made from pureed fruit or fruit juice and sugar. Unlike sherbet, sorbet does not contain milk. It is sometimes flavored with wine or liqueur. Sorbet is served as a palate cleanser between courses or as a dessert. Sorbet is also referred to as ice or granita, but these have a more grainy texture than sorbet.

SOUR CREAM

A commercial dairy product made from pasteurized sweet cream, has a tangy flavor and thick consistency used to enrich savory and sweet recipes or as a topping. Like buttermilk, its extra acidity boosts the leavening action of baking soda.

SOY MILK

Made from pressed cooked soybeans. It has a slightly bitter taste, so it is often flavored with vanilla, honey or carob. Soy milk is an excellent non-dairy substitution for people with milk allergies and for vegans. However, unlike cow's milk, it has a tendency to curdle when mixed with acidic foods. Soy milk is high in protein and iron-rich, and it is low in calcium, fat, and sodium. It is also cholesterol free.

SOY SAUCE

An Asian seasoning and condiment made from fermented soybeans, wheat, salt, and water. Light soy sauce is fairly thin in texture and light in flavor. Dark soy sauce often has added caramel and is darker in color, sweeter in flavor, and thicker in texture than light soy sauce. Japanese soy sauces have a milder, sweeter, less salty taste than Chinese sauces. Indonesian sweet dark soy sauce, also known as ketjap manis, is a dark, sweet soy sauce commonly used in Indonesian cooking. If unavailable, it can be approximated by simmering 1/2 cup soy sauce with 2 tablespoons each of molasses and dark brown sugar until the sugar dissolves. Low-sodium soy sauce is also available. Soy sauces keep indefinitely.

SPAGHETTI SQUASH

Large winter squashes that are oval in shape with yellow skin. When the flesh is cooked, it separates into spaghetti-like strands.

STOCK

Also known as broth, is a liquid derived from slowly simmering poultry, meat, fish, or vegetables in water, along with herbs. It is used as a primary cooking liquid or to moisten or flavor foods as they cook. Stock may be made from beef bones, chicken bones and parts, fish skeletons, lamb bones, or a variety of vegetables. Stocks can be made by the home cook and stored in the refrigerator or freezer for future use. Some, such as beef, chicken, and fish, are available canned, frozen, or in concentrated form.

SUGAR SNAP PEAS

Plump peas that are a cross between garden peas and snow peas. They do not require shelling and are eaten pods and all. Choose crisp pods with bright green color and refrigerate in a plastic bag for up to 3 days.

SUMMER SQUASH

Small squashes with edible skin and tender flesh containing edible seeds. They range in color and shape from yellow crookneck squash to green or golden straightneck to green or golden zucchini. The flesh is eaten raw or cooked.

SUN-DRIED TOMATOES

These have been sliced crosswise or halved, then dried in the sun to develop their intense, sweet-tart flavor and pleasantly chewy texture. They are available dry or packed in olive oil, sometimes with herbs and spices. The dry type should be soaked in liquid before use.

SUPERFINE SUGAR

Granulated sugar ground to form extra-fine granules that dissolve quickly in liquids and are ideal for some baking recipes. Store sugar indefinitely in an airtight container.

SWEET POTATO

A tuber native to Central America. There are many varieties of the sweet potato from the pale yellow to the dark-skinned variety that in America is often called a yam. The pale yellow variety is not terribly sweet after being cooked and the texture can be dry. The dark-skinned variety has a sweeter flesh and a moister texture when cooked. Pick sweet potatoes with firm, smooth skins. Store in a cool, dark place and use within 1 week.

SWEETENED CONDENSED MILK

Sold in cans, is made by evaporating 60 percent of the water from whole milk, then sweetening it with sugar. It is used to enrich dessert recipes

SWISS CHARD OR CHARD OR SILVERBEET

A leafy, dark green vegetable, related to the beet, with thick, crisp white or red stems and ribs. The leaves, often trimmed from the stems and ribs, are used raw or cooked. Select chard with crisp, unblemished leaves. Wash in cold water, pat dry, and place in a plastic bag lined with paper towels; refrigerate for up to 3 days.

T TABASCO SAUCE

Made from very hot, small peppers originally from the Mexican state of Tabasco. The peppers are used specifically for the trademarked sauce developed by the McIlhenny family over 125 years ago. Tabasco sauce is made from tabasco peppers, vinegar and salt.

TAHINI

A smooth, rich paste ground from sesame seeds. It is used in Middle Eastern cooking to enrich the flavor and texture of savory and sweet dishes. Jars and cans of tahini are found in Middle Eastern markets and well-stocked food stores.

TAPAS

Appetizers eaten throughout Spain in bars and restaurants. They usually accompany a glass of sherry or a cocktail. Tapas range from a bowl of olives or diced ham and cheese to an entire meal.

TAPIOCA

Derived from the dried, starchy root of the tropical manioc plant. Quick-cooking tapioca is used as a thickener for pie and tart fillings and to make a desert of the same name. Dried, pellet-sized balls known as pearl tapioca are soaked before they are made into a pudding. Store indefinitely in a cool, dry place.

TARRAGON

A fragrant, distinctively sweet herb used to season salads, seafood, chicken, light meats, eggs, and vegetables. It is sold as fresh sprigs or dried chopped leaves. Store fresh tarragon in the refrigerator, wrapped in paper towels and enclosed in a plastic bag. Dried tarragon, found with other seasonings in all supermarkets, should be stored away from light, heat, and moisture for up to 1 year; crush in the palm of the hand to release its flavor.

THYME

Fragrant, clean-tasting, small-leaved herb used to season poultry, lamb, seafood, and vegetables. It is available as fresh sprigs or dried leaves. A variety called lemon thyme imparts a pleasant lemon scent to foods. Store fresh thyme in the refrigerator, wrapped in paper towels and enclosed in a plastic bag. Dried thyme, found with other seasonings in all supermarkets, should be stored away from light, heat, and moisture for up to 1 year; crush in the palm of the hand to release its flavor.

TOMATILLOS

Also called tomatillos verdes, are small green fruits resembling the tomato but related to the Cape gooseberry. Fresh tomatillos are usually encased in papery brown husks, which are easy to peel away. The flesh has a tart, lemony flavor and is often used in Mexican sauces and stews. Choose firm tomatillos with tight-fitting husks. Refrigerate in a paper bag for up to 10 days. Canned tomatillos are found in well-stocked grocery stores.

TOMATO PASTE

A commercial concentrate of puréed tomatoes commonly sold in small cans and used to add flavor and body to sauces. For superior flavor, look for tubes of imported double-strength tomato concentrate in Italian delicatessens and well-stocked food stores.

TOMATO PURÉE

Made of cooked tomatoes, is available canned in most food stores and is used to add flavor and body to sauces. To make fresh tomato purée, peel and seed tomatoes, then purée in a blender or in a food processor fitted with the metal blade.

TOMATO SAUCE

A canned commercial product that consists of tomato purée enhanced with various flavorings, including onions, garlic, spices, or herbs.

TORTILLAS

A thin, flat, round, unleavened Mexican bread used as edible wrappers for meat, poultry, seafood, cheese, and other foods. Made from finely ground cornmeal, corn tortillas are thicker and coarser than flour tortillas, which are made from wheat flour. Commercially manufactured tortillas are widely available in food stores and ethnic markets.

BUTTERBALL HEN TURKEY

Female turkey weighing up to 16 pounds, 14 weeks old (3.5 months).

BUTTERBALL TOM TURKEY

A male turkey weighing 16 to 30 pounds, 17 weeks old (4.5 months).

TURMERIC

A pungent, earthy-flavored ground spice that, like saffron, adds a vibrant yellow color to any dish.

TURNIPS

Small, creamy white root vegetables, tinged purple or green at the crown. They have firm, pungent, yet slightly sweet flesh that is generally cooked by boiling, braising, or stewing. Choose smaller turnips that feel heavy for their size and are firm to the touch. Refrigerate in a plastic bag for up to 1 week.

U**UNFLAVORED GELATIN**

Derived from animal products, is used to give shape and body to sweet and savory dishes. It is sold in envelopes holding 1 tablespoon, which is sufficient to jell about 2 cups liquid.

UNSALTED BUTTER

Contains no salt. It is sometimes labeled as sweet butter. It is preferred by many for cooking and baking. Salt acts as a preservative, and without it, butter is more perishable.

UNSWEETENED CHOCOLATE

A baking chocolate, is pure, unsweetened cocoa liquor consisting of half cocoa butter and half chocolate solids, pressed or molded into blocks. Also known as bitter chocolate, it tastes unpalatable when eaten on its own but provides intense chocolate flavor when combined with sugar, butter, and milk or cream. It is also known as bitter chocolate. Store chocolate well wrapped in a cool, dry place for up to 4 months.

V**VANILLA BEANS**

From the aromatic pods of a variety of orchid. They are used to make vanilla extract and are used on their own as a flavoring. The dried aromatic beans are sold in well-stocked food stores and specialty food shops; wrap them in plastic and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

VANILLA EXTRACT

One of the most popular flavorings in dessert making, is derived from aromatic pods of a variety of orchid. The extract, or essence, is made by dissolving the essential oil of the vanilla bean in an alcohol base. Use products labeled "pure" or "natural" vanilla extract. Extract from Madagascar has the best quality.

VEGETABLE OIL

Refers to oils extracted from numerous sources—corn, soybeans, peanuts, cottonseeds, safflower seeds, rape seeds (for canola oil) and sunflower seeds. Pale in color and neutral in flavor, they can be heated to high temperatures. Cold-pressed oils are preferred over those processed using heat. Canola oil is the healthy choice for today's cooks. It is cholesterol free and with only 1 gram of fat, it has 50% less saturated fat than olive or other vegetable oils. With its high smoking point and mild flavor, canola oil is a preferred choice for salad dressings as well as cooking.

VEGETABLE OIL COOKING SPRAY

A commercial product that consists of a combination of oil, lecithin, and a harmless propellant used to give cooking and other surfaces a nonstick coating. The spray contains very little fat.

VEGETABLE SHORTENING

A solid vegetable fat sometimes used in place of or in combination with butter. In baked goods, it is used to “shorten” the flour—that is, to make it flaky and tender.

VIDALIA ONIONS

Grown in the state of Georgia, have brown skins and sweet white flesh that is the most flavorful when eaten raw. The onions can also be cooked.

VINEGAR

Meaning literally “sour wine,” results when wine or another alcoholic liquid is allowed to ferment a second time, turning it acidic. Any vinegar will highlight the qualities of the alcoholic liquid from which it has been made. When the sharp acidity of vinegar is desired without any particular character, use distilled white vinegar. Vinegar lasts indefinitely, but it is best to store it away from light and heat.

W**WALLA WALLA ONIONS**

Grown in the state of Washington, have brown skins and sweet white flesh that is the most flavorful when eaten raw. They can also be cooked.

WALNUTS

Rich, crisp-textured nuts with crinkled surfaces. They have a rich, slightly astringent flavor. English walnuts, the most familiar variety, are available whole or shelled (halves or pieces). American black walnuts have a stronger flavor.

WASABI

Asian horseradish made from the root of an Asian plant, which is also grown in the U.S.. The powder is mixed with water to form a paste that is green in color and has a sharp, fiery flavor. Wasabi is served with sashimi and sushi. It is available in specialty and Asian markets in both fresh and powder form.

WATER CHESTNUTS

Walnut-sized bulbs of an Asian aquatic plant. The crisp texture and sweet flesh of fresh water chestnuts are divine. When choosing chestnuts, make sure they are smooth and firm. The brown skins conceal a crisp, slightly sweet white flesh that is fresh tasting even when cooked. Peeled whole, sliced, or chopped chestnuts are commonly canned. Fresh water chestnuts are found in Asian markets.

WATERCRESS

A slightly peppery, dark green leaf vegetable commercially cultivated and also found wild in freshwater streams. Choose healthy bunches that are not yellow or wilted. Wrap in damp paper towels and store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for 3 days.

WATTLE

Bright red appendage at neck of a turkey.

WHEAT BERRIES

(whole wheat kernels) are highly nutritious—but slow cooking—because they retain the bran, germ, and endosperm. They make robust additions to cereals, stuffing, pilafs and breads.

WHEAT BRAN

The papery brown coating of a whole grain of wheat. Removed during milling, wheat bran is sold packaged and in bulk.

WHEAT GERM

The embryo of the wheat kernel. It is removed during the milling of white flour but is left intact in whole-wheat varieties. Wheat germ is sold raw or lightly toasted.

WHIPPING CREAM

Also called heavy cream, has a milk fat content of between 36 to 40 percent. When whipped, it will double in volume.

WHITE CHOCOLATE

A chocolate like product for eating or baking that includes pure cocoa butter, sugar, powdered milk, and sometimes vanilla. The best quality is European white chocolate made exclusively with cocoa butter, without coconut oil or vegetable shortening. Store chocolate well wrapped in a cool, dry place for up to 4 months.

WHITE ONIONS

Which have both white skin and white flesh, tend to be sweet and mild in flavor. If they are unavailable, substitute with mild yellow onions.

WHITE PEPPER

Peppercorns are a mild-flavored, light tan colored seed or powder. Typically used in light colored sauces.

WHITE POTATOES

Medium-sized tuberous vegetables with thin tan skins and a texture finer than that of baking potatoes but somewhat coarser than that of red potatoes. They are a good all-purpose choice for cooking. Choose firm, well-shaped potatoes, without sprouts or a greenish cast. Store in a dark, dry place for several weeks.

WHITE RICE

Refers to a number of varieties used in sweet and savory dishes. Long-grain white rice, the most common type, has slender grains that steam to a light, fluffy consistency. Short-grain and medium-grain varieties have a stickier consistency when cooked.

WHITE WINE VINEGAR

is a pale, slightly pungent vinegar made from white wine. It is the base for many herb vinegars.

WHOLE-WHEAT FLOUR

Brown in color, is derived from whole, unbleached wheat berries, from which neither the bran nor the germ has been removed. Store whole-wheat flour in a cool, dry place for up to 5 months or refrigerate or freeze for longer storage.

WILD RICE

Unrelated to rice, is a grain native to Minnesota and cultivated in other regions. The unpolished dark brown kernels have a rich nutlike flavor and texture.

WINE VINEGAR

Made from red or white wine and is commonly used in vinaigrettes. Derived from the French vin aigre, "sour wine," vinegar is made by bacterial activity that's converts fermented liquids such as wine, beer or cider into a weak solution of acetic acid.

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WINTER SQUASHES

Unlike soft-skinned summer squashes, which are picked immature off the vine—are harvested after their skin has hardened. The tough skins conceal richly colored flesh that ranges from the pale yellow of spaghetti squash to the deep orange of butternut squash. Buy squashes that are heavy for their size, with hard skins. Whole squash will keep several months in a cool, dry place; wrap cut pieces and refrigerate for 4 days.

WONTON WRAPPERS

Thin round or square sheets of dough used for making Asian appetizers, dumplings, and other dishes. They measure about 3 1/2 inches across. One variety is made from a wheat-based dough; another is made from an egg-based dough. Wonton wrappers are available in well-stocked grocery stores and Asian markets.

WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE

A traditional English seasoning or condiment, is an intensely flavorful, savory blend of many ingredients, including molasses, soy sauce, garlic, onion, and anchovies. It is popular as a marinade ingredient or a table sauce.

Y**YAM**

A tuber that grows mainly in the tropical and subtropical regions of Africa, Asia, and America. In America, the yam is often confused with the sweet potato. The yam has a flesh that ranges in color from pale white to a deep orange. It can be prepared much like a potato or sweet potato, however, its flesh is less sweet than a sweet potato. Select yams with firm, smooth skins. Store in a cool, dark place and use within 1 week.

YEAST

Tiny living plant-like microorganism that exists all around us—in soil, on plants and in the air. It has been called the oldest plant cultivated by man. Yeast is responsible for fermentation, a process that lets people make bread, beer and wine.

YELLOW ONIONS

The common, white-fleshed, large onions distinguished by their strong flavor and dry, yellowish brown skin.

YELLOW SPLIT PEAS

Small round peas that have been dried and halved. When cooked, they have a mild flavor. The peas are sold packaged or in bulk.

YELLOW WAX BEANS

The edible immature pods of the bean plant, a legume. Fresh beans are firm and smooth, without bruising or spotting; avoid those that are leathery or bulging with seeds. Stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

YOGURT

Milk fermented by bacterial cultures that impart a mildly acidic flavor and custardlike texture. So-called plain yogurt refers to the unflavored product. Plain and flavored yogurts are available made from whole, low-fat, or nonfat milk.

YOUNG TURKEY

A turkey less than 28 weeks old (about 6 months) at time of slaughter. Tenderness depends on age of turkey, not size. Butterball turkeys of all sizes (hens or toms) will be equally tender.

Z**ZEST**

The thin, brightly colored, outermost layer of the peel of a citrus fruit. Containing most of the peel's aromatic essential oils, it provides lively flavor to both sweet and savory dishes.

ZUCCHINI

Slender, tube-shaped summer squash, have edible green, yellow, or green-and-cream skin and pale, tender flesh. Small zucchini have a finer texture and flavor and tinier seeds than fully matured zucchini; these baby zucchini are sometimes sold with their edible flowers still attached. The delicate blossoms can be used in pasta sauces or can be stuffed and sautéed. Zucchini are also known as courgettes.