

# Meal Presentation and Garnishes

Eating is not merely a material pleasure. Eating well gives a spectacular joy to life and contributes immensely to goodwill and happy companionship. It is of great importance to the morale.  
- Elsa Schiaparelli



☞ Remember — an appealing meal is not only flavorful, but also attractive at a glance.

Garnishing is an easy way to brighten any plate. A garnish can vary from a sprig of parsley to intricately carved fruits and vegetables.

## Why is Meal Presentation Important?

Exciting meal presentation is the perfect introduction to a wonderful dining experience. Sure, the perfect recipe can create the perfect taste, but without visual appeal, the meal is boring and unattractive. All of the senses are involved when dining. We smell the herbs and spices, hear the crunch, feel the moisture, and taste the flavor. Before all of these senses kick into gear, however, we see the food and instantly judge whether or not we even want to taste it.

Presentation is everything.

# Easy Garnishes

**Strawberry Fans:** Use fresh strawberries with the green tops still attached. Slice from the tip almost all the way to the stem end; carefully fan out the berry slices.

**Cherry Tomato Roses:** Score an X on the blossom end of each cherry tomato. Using a sharp knife, carefully peel back the skin partway down the side of the tomato to make four petals.

**Fluted cucumbers or zucchini:** Draw the tines of a fork lengthwise down a cucumber or zucchini; repeat all around vegetable. Cut crosswise into slices.



**Green Onion Brushes:** Slice off roots and most of top portions from green onions. Cut slashes at both ends to make a fringe. Place onions in ice water, and the ends will curl back to resemble brushes.

**Carrot Curls:** Using a vegetable peeler, cut thin length wise strips of carrot. Roll each carrot strip and secure with a wooden pick. Place in ice water for several hours to curl. Just before garnishing, remove wooden picks.

## Tips for Appealing Meal Presentation

- Do not decorate with inedible items.
- Any edible garnish should be compatible with the underlying food.
- Complex dishes require simple garnishes; simple dishes can handle more complex garnishes.
- Use platters.
- Decorate with natural colors. Edible flowers and fruit are great for color.
- Present food or garnishes in a geometrically pleasing shape and alternate heights of the food.
- Use an odd number of pieces on the food or the plate.
- Sprinkle and drizzle “dull” foods with items such as sauces and seeds.

