WASTE LESS, TASTE MORE 011

Cut Your Protein Before Cooking



PLAN THE PORTIONS. SAVE THE TRIMMINGS.

When preparing meat, poultry, or fish for a dinner party, cut individual portions before cooking when the recipe allows. You can create consistent servings for the plates and freeze usable trimmings for a future soup.

1 Plan the portions before cutting

Look at the size, thickness, and natural shape of the protein. Cut portions that will work with your cooking method and the presentation you have in mind.

Why: Similar thicknesses make cooking more predictable and help you repeat the arrangement across the plates.

2 Keep useful trimmings

Set aside clean, edible pieces that are too small or irregular for the main presentation. Remove unwanted gristle and check fish carefully for bones.

Why: A piece does not need to look perfect to contribute flavor and substance to another meal.

3 Freeze with a future soup in mind

Package usable trimmings promptly in freezer-rated bags or containers. Keep different proteins separate and label each package with its contents, date, and whether it is raw or cooked.

Why: Clearly identified packages make it easier to choose the right ingredients and cooking method later.

KITCHEN NOTES

Work with the natural shape

Aim for practical consistency. Avoid cutting away good food simply to make every serving look identical.

Match the soup to the protein

Chicken pieces can become chicken and vegetable soup. Beef trimmings can become beef and barley soup. Fish pieces can become chowder.

Let the cooking method guide you

Some cuts are better cooked whole and sliced afterward. Use this approach where individual portions suit the dish.

THE PLATING MINDSET

Prepare the pieces you want to present, and give the usable trimmings a purpose beyond tonight’s plate.