



Time Saving Kitchen Tools for Healthy Eating: Part 3- The Sheet Pan

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This month's time saving tool is one that most of us have in our kitchens, but we might use only occasionally to make a batch of cookies. The common sheet pan can be used for a multitude of healthy dishes. The best part about food cooked on a sheet pan is that you can prepare the ingredients quickly, throw everything on the pan and let it roast as you do other things. Food comes out tender with a caramelized flavor that is out of this world!

We have been experimenting with many sheet pan dishes in the last few weeks and haven't had a bad one yet. Even though we have been succeeding with more complex recipes some of the best and easiest are the simplest. Recipes I make every week include: [Maple Sweet Potatoes with Smoked Paprika](#) or [Greek Sheet Pan Chicken with Lemon and Potatoes](#).

For most sheet pan recipes all you need is a sheet pan, cutting board, knife and a bowl (to combine the ingredients with oil and seasonings.) Oven temperature usually varies from 350 – 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Something larger (like a whole chicken) cooked on a sheet pan needs a lower temperature and longer cooking time so it will cook all the way through, while thinner, one-layer foods often do well with a higher temperature and less time. Another favorite recipe is broccoli "steaks" in the oven. For this, I start with a full head of

broccoli and cut it into ½" slices which makes large pieces (the steak). I add the steaks to a bowl, add my favorite spices (thyme, oregano, salt and pepper) and at least a ¼ cup of extra virgin olive oil. Sometimes I will add chopped garlic as well. Combine all the ingredients well with your hands, place them on the sheet pan in a single layer and then roast them for about 20 minutes at 400 degrees. The smaller florets will get almost crispy (which I find to be super delicious) and the bigger florets will be soft, slightly caramelized and full of flavor.

You can create an entire meal on a sheet pan. The trick with this is using foods that all take about the same amount of time to cook. For example, if you are cooking fish, you want to add vegetables that take relatively little time to roast such as asparagus or sliced zucchini or summer squash. Chicken thighs take significantly longer to roast so you can add cut up potatoes or carrots which also take longer to cook. I like to fill the whole sheet pan with food so there are always leftovers. The sheet pan is large enough so I always make extra that I can eat for lunch the next day. Finally, cleanup is super easy as all there is to clean is a bowl, pan, knife and cutting board.

Experiment with different recipes and I think you will find the sheet pan to be your new friend and your belly will be very happy as well.

