

# Mise en Place

(meez ahn PLAHS)

In the foodservice industry, getting ready for the cooking you're about to do is called mise en place.

**Mise en place** is French for "to put in place" and it means the preparation and assembly of ingredients, pans, utensils, and equipment or serving pieces needed for a particular dish or service.

Mise en place solves two basic problems facing the professional chef.

**Problem #1:** There is too much work to do in a kitchen to leave everything until the last minute; some work must be done ahead of time.

**Problem #2:** Most foods are at their best quality immediately after preparation. They deteriorate as they are held, and they begin to lose their nutritional value.

1. Break each menu item down into its stages of production.
  - Determine which stages may be done in advance.
  - Assembling and preparing ingredients are important parts of advance preparation. This includes cleaning and cutting produce, cutting and trimming meats, and preparing breadings and batters for frying.
  - Some steps of a recipe can be done in advance if they do not result in loss of quality.
  - Final cooking should be done as close to service time as possible.
2. Determine the best way to hold the item at its final stage of pre-preparation.
  - Sauces and soups are frequently kept hot, 140°F (60°C), in steam tables or other holding equipment. Many foods, such as vegetables, should be kept hot for only short periods because they quickly become overcooked.
  - Refrigerator temperatures below 40°F (4.4°C) are best for preserving the quality of most foods, especially perishable meats, fish, and vegetables, before final cooking or reheating.
3. Determine how long it takes to do each step in a recipe. Plan a production schedule beginning with the preparations that take the longest.
  - Many tasks can be carried on at once because they don't require your complete attention the entire time. For example, it may take six to eight hours to prepare a stock, but you don't have to stand and watch it the entire time.
4. Examine recipes to see whether they can be revised for better efficiency and quality. For example, instead of preparing a full batch of green peas and holding them for service in the steam table, you might blanch and chill them, and then heat portions to order in a sauté pan, steamer, or microwave oven.