

# COOK'S ILLUSTRATED

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## PERFECT OATMEAL

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*Serves 3 to 4. Published March 1, 2000.*

### WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

We set out to see which variety of oats, cooked in what particular way, would give us the best oatmeal recipe. We found that first toasting steel-cut oats with a small amount of butter in a skillet accented their nutty flavor and then cooking them uncovered in three cups water to one cup milk at a steady simmer, without stirring, gave the oatmeal recipe a creamy (not mushy) texture.

Many supermarkets sell prepackaged steel-cut oats, but we found they were often stale and always expensive. A better option is to purchase them in the bulk section of a natural food store. To double the recipe, use a large skillet to toast the oats; increase the cooking time to 10 to 15 minutes once the salt has been added. If desired, pass maple syrup or brown sugar separately when serving, or try the Honeyed Fig Topping with Vanilla and Cinnamon.

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups water
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 cup steel-cut oats
- 1/4 teaspoon table salt

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bring water and milk to simmer in large saucepan over medium heat. Meanwhile, heat butter in medium skillet over medium heat until just beginning to foam; add oats and toast, stirring constantly with wooden spoon, until golden and fragrant with butterscotch-like aroma, 1 1/2 to 2 minutes.
2. Stir toasted oats into the simmering liquid, reduce heat to medium-low; simmer gently, until mixture thickens and resembles gravy, about 20 minutes. Add salt and stir lightly with spoon handle. Continue simmering, stirring occasionally with wooden spoon handle, until oats absorb almost all liquid and oatmeal is thick and creamy, with a pudding-like consistency, about 7 to 10 minutes. Off heat, let oatmeal stand uncovered 5 minutes. Serve immediately, with the following topping, if desired.

### TECHNIQUE

#### Toasting Oatmeal



Toasting in a skillet accents

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the oats' nutty flavor.



America's Test Kitchen is a 2,500-square-foot kitchen located just outside of Boston. It is the home of Cook's Country and Cook's Illustrated magazines and is the workday destination for more than three dozen test cooks, editors, and cookware specialists. Our mission is to test recipes until we understand how and why they work and arrive at the best version. We also test kitchen equipment and supermarket ingredients in search of brands that offer the best value and performance. You can watch us work by tuning in to America's Test Kitchen ([www.americastestkitchen.com](http://www.americastestkitchen.com)) on public television.