

Cooking Basics: When and How To Deglaze a Pan

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(Image credit: [Apartment Therapy](#))

Before we really got into cooking, deglazing was definitely not a part of our vocabulary. We also assumed that the brown gunk adhered to the bottom of the pan indicated another burned dinner – not the delicious fond we now know it to be! If you're scratching your head right now, read on...

The first step in most recipes is sautéing the chopped vegetables and/or browning the meat. In both cases, small particles of the food being cooked will stick to the bottom of the pan (unless you're using a non-stick pan, of course) and caramelize. This is what is called the fond.

It's natural to assume that those particles are burnt and your dish is ruined. They *look* burnt after all! The trick here is to use your nose. If everything still smells delicious, you're right on track. The glaze will also look shiny and moist. If it does start to burn, not only will you smell it, but the fond will also become bone dry.

Deglazing those little bits is one of the most fundamental flavor-boosting techniques we can use in our cooking. In this process, you add a cup or so of liquid (like broth, wine, or water) to the hot pan. This will immediately create clouds of steam and help lift the fond. You'll need to scrape the pan with a spatula to get every last bit of it up!

Check out our before and after in the pictures below. In this case, we used tomato juices to deglaze the pan.

If you're making a soup or a braise, you can deglaze the pan while the vegetables and other ingredients are still there. Do this right before you add the rest of the liquid in the recipe and set the dish aside to simmer. Alternatively, you can start building a sauce for your dish by removing all the food from the pan and then deglazing.

Remember, you can deglaze a pan whether or not the recipe calls for it. In our opinion, you can never go wrong with deglazing!