How to Garnish Like a Pro

Eating food is an experience with all of the senses. It has to smell good, feel good, sound good, taste good of course, and it has to look good. You could just scoop some mashed potatoes on a plate with some vegetables and meat, or you could go that extra step and really take the time to put it together. Garnishes could be just what you need to add that extra sprig of appealing color and therefore intrigue in the dish. Here are some great tips to garnish like a professional.

1. Add curls and twirls. With a vegetable peeler you can shave large curl wedges of Parmesan cheese, or chocolate bars. Curl ribbons of Parmesan to add to the top of a salad or on your pasta. Turn your pastries into masterpieces with a little curl of chocolate.

2. Make skewers of tasty foods to go on your dish of soup, salad, or entrée. Like a toothpick with a few cherry tomatoes, fresh basil, and mozzarella cheese on the side of salad. Thread cooked sausage and crusty bread to serve with bean soup.

3. Top entrées and soups with an Italian garnish of parsley, garlic, and lemon peel. You can change up the citrus fruit and herbs to play well with your main dish. Try toasted coconut, minced lime peel, and cilantro over shrimp. Use minced lemon peel, basil, and shallots over your baked chicken.

4. Chives makes for a simple and great garnish to savory dishes. Sprinkle over the top, or you can string a few pieces through a piece of dry spaghetti and put three standing up inside the dish.

5. Try some corkscrew shrimp on top of fish. Cut shrimp in half lengthwise and sauté with some butter and parsley. As the shrimp cooks, it will turn into corkscrews you can put on top of the fish.

6. A dollop of sour cream mixed with some fresh herbs will freshen up just about any dish.

7. Slices of citrus fruit with some sprigs of parsley will add some nice color to a dish. Think about what you’re serving and what goes well - a few lime slices and cilantro with a broiled fish, for example.

8. Add chopped, fresh herbs to things. It will add color and a nice bit of flavor to many dishes. Use some parsley in your mashed potatoes.

9. Pipe thick sauces or mashed potatoes onto the plate. Using a pastry bag to pipe onto a dish and make the presentation more appealing.

10. Salsa makes for a tasty and interesting colorful garnish. Don’t just make a typical salsa, though - try different fruits and vegetables which will complement your dish. With pork, dice up some apples, add minced sage, red onion, and apple butter and put it on top of the pork.

Garnish should be edible, appealing, and it should go with the dish and mix well. Get creative and have fun experimenting with different flavors and combinations. With a little bit of finesse, you can make beautiful dishes just like a professional chef.