

## *the Frugal Chef*

Pan-frying meat, fish and seafood is not always as easy as it sounds. Sometimes it comes out overcooked, undercooked, 'boiled' and just plain inedible. So here are some tips that I hope will help you in your quest of the perfect piece of meat!

- Whenever you want to sear and brown any kind of meat, including seafood you must make sure that it is dry. Make sure you pat dry it with a paper towel. This way you remove the moisture and prevent it from steaming. Once you have dried it you can proceed to season it.
- Make sure your pan is hot. Heat the pan and then add the oil. Heat the oil until it is hot, not smoking, and then add your meat to the pan. The meat will stick to the bottom of the pan when you first add it. Please, leave it alone! As the crust forms you will be able to flip it without a problem.
- Do not overcrowd your pan! This is very important! If you have meats overlapping or with their edges touching you will create a steaming process. Remember you do not want this. You want a piece of nicely, evenly browned meat.
- Finally, again, leave it alone. Do not meddle with it. Do not stand there turning it around, flipping it, peeking at it. Leave it alone! Buy yourself a good pair of tongs and, after a few minutes, slightly lift one of the corners. If it is brown go ahead and flip it. If it isn't let it be and check again in a few minutes. Please do not use a fork to flip your meat. You do not want to prick it and have all your delicious juices seep away.

