

Searing

Kitchen

What browning actually is, and the three things that prevent it.

The Maillard reaction needs heat and the absence of water.

1

Dry the surface

Pat with paper. Surface water must boil off before browning can start.

2

Heat the pan properly

Above 140°C. Oil should shimmer, not smoke.

3

Do not crowd

Steam released with nowhere to go stops the browning. Cook in batches.

4

Leave it alone

Do not move it. It releases from the pan when the crust has formed.

5

Deglaze

The browned residue is flavour. Lift it with liquid into the sauce.

WHY IT FAILS

Wet surface

Pan not hot enough

Too much in the pan

Moving it too early

Browning is not sealing. It does not keep moisture in; it creates flavour compounds that were not there before.