



Kitchen Equipment, Tools and Such

Like most endeavors, the right equipment makes the task easier. This list paves the way. Links will take you to items I like.

Must haves: tools I believe to be essential

Pots and pans [All-Clad]

A heavy bottomed 10-inch skillet, a 12-inch skillet with a lid, an 8-quart pot, a 3- or 4-quart sauce pan and a Dutch oven. A Dutch oven is an investment, but one worth making because it lasts forever and will help you become a better cook because temperature is evenly distributed so food cooks more evenly, less likely to burn.

Mixing bowls [stainless steel] [glass]

Glass or metal mixing bowls in various sizes. Plastic bowls hold odors, are harder to keep clean and can bend out of shape.

Knives [paring] [chef's] [serrated]

Start with a paring knife, 8-inch chef's or Santoku knife and a serrated knife.

Cutting boards [plastic]

Wood, bamboo or plastic is less important than keeping them clean. Two cutting boards are even better, especially if they are different colors to help keep raw meat and vegetables separate. Pop plastic boards in the dishwasher

Measuring spoons [complete set]

Accurate and dishwasher safe. I like complete sets of stainless steel spoons on a ring so you don't have to hunt for the teaspoon measure or discover it melted when it got too close to the dishwasher heating element.

Measuring cups [dry ingredients] [liquid ingredients]

Yes, it is best to have at least one set for dry (I have two!) and one set for liquids. For liquid, I prefer glass so they can also be used in the microwave; they should be clear so you can see the level of the liquid.

Sheet pans [heavy gauge]

A workhorse for baking cookies, catching drips, baking pizza.

Colander [large] [small]

Use to drain pasta, rinse fruits and vegetables, and sort and rinse lentils and beans.

Grater [box]

Shred carrots and zucchini, slice cucumbers, zest fruit, and even grate cheese.

Microplane grater [microplane]

Great for citrus zest, garlic and for adding a small amount of chocolate shavings to amp up flavors.



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Citrus juicer or squeezer [juicer]

A hand-held juicer for lemons, limes and oranges makes juicing easy and adds fresh flavor to drinks, salad dressings, pasta and salsas.

Food thermometer [instant] [jelly/candy] [remote]

The only way to know when food is cooked to a safe temperature.

Baking dish [metal] [glass]

9 x 13 baking dish — a great workhorse in your kitchen.

Wooden spoons [Oxo]

They don't transfer heat and won't scratch the surface of pans plus, they are inexpensive.

Salad spinner [Oxo]

Dry greens last longer and help keep the dressing on the greens.

Blender [Vitamix]

Create smoothies and blend soups and sauces.

Mixer [handheld] [stand]

A handheld is handy to have. Whip egg whites, mash potatoes, cream butter and sugar. I also have a stand mixer that is more than 30 years old; an investment piece that is on the nice-to-have list.

Slow cooker [West Bend]

Soups, stews, lasagna, applesauce.

Wire whisks [stainless steel]

Blend vinaigrettes and dressings, aerate flour and beat eggs.

Heat-resistant spatulas [Oxo]

Use for stirring on the stove, scrapping the last bits out of a bowl and frosting a cake.

Tongs [metal]

Long and short, plastic tips and a locking mechanism. The length helps keep your arm out of the fire but beware that the plastic can melt. Toss salads and serve vegetables.

Vegetable peeler [Oxo]

A sturdy peeler is safer to use.

Silicon baking mats [Silpat]

Not just for cookies, but also baked fish, cheese crisps and anything else that might stick. Food literally rinses off these silicon mats.

Liquid soap at the sink [J.R. Watkins]

Encourages cooks and diners to keep hands clean.

Pot holders [variety] [gloves]

What's to say about potholders, other than: don't use them wet.



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Nice to have: add to your wish list

Food processor [Cuisinart]

Whirl bean dip, make pie dough, chop vegetables, shred cheese, slice apples — lots of uses.

Kitchen scale [Etekcity]

Helps with accuracy in baking and to determine portion sizes.

Cast-iron skillet [Lodge]

Even heat distribution. Great for searing. A must for corn bread and cheese fundido.

Tube pan [Nordic Ware]

Angel food cake, monkey bread.

Stainless steel scoops [Hamilton Beach]

For cookies, filling muffin tins, drop biscuits and scooping ice cream — you can even use them to measure sugar.

Kitchen triple timer [Oxo]

Three timers helps you multitask with what's in the oven, cooking pasta, the sprinkler — you name it.

“Cheater” eyeglasses [Peepers]

See labels, ingredients, recipes and iPad.

Fruit bowl [metal]

Encourages fruit consumption, and this one is particularly stylish and useful!

Kitchen scissors [Joyce Chen]

To trim skin off chicken, cut up fresh herbs, open packages.

Pressure cooker [Presto]

Makes meal time fast, easy and more energy efficient. I suggest a 6- to 8-quart stainless steel pressure cooker.

Immersion blenders [Cuisinart]

Hand-held blenders are great for soups or large batches of cocoa.

Ten-inch dinner plates [Melange]

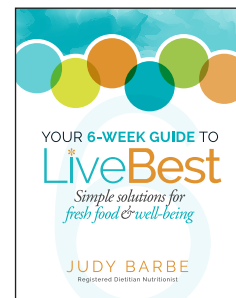
Reducing your plate size from 12-inch to 10-inch results in a 22% less food being served.

A no-brainer way to control portion sizes.

Tall, narrow glasses [Paksh]

People pour 20-30% more into short, wide glasses, but they believe they've done the opposite, so tall and narrow glasses are better.

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