

Essential Cooking Tools

For the novice cook, getting started in the kitchen can be a daunting challenge, but the task is made more difficult without having the right tools for the job. How do you know what you truly need? Here is a list of essential kitchen tools that will help you tackle just about any job. Buy the best you can afford, and plan to add to your tools over time.



Knives

- **8- or 10-inch chef's knife:** This will be your kitchen workhorse; if you buy only one knife, this should be it.
- **Paring knife:** Use for peeling and small vegetable work.
- **Serrated knife:** Use for slicing bread, roasts, and some tender vegetables, such as tomatoes.

Measuring tools

- **Mixing bowls:** These are usually sold in sets; use for combining ingredients
- **Liquid measuring cup:** Look for a 2-cup measuring cup with easy to read measuring units
- **Dry measuring cups:** A set will include 1/4, 1/3, 1/2, and 1 cup options for doling out dry ingredients such as flour and sugar
- **Measuring spoons:** Essential for dealing with spices, a set will include spoons for 1/8, 1/4, 1/2, and 1 teaspoon and also 1 tablespoon

Pots and pans

- **12-inch skillet with lid:** This will likely be your main cooking pan, useful for searing, sautéing, and shallow frying. Skillets are made of a variety of materials—aluminum, stainless steel, copper—that all come with pros and cons. A cast iron skillet is relatively inexpensive and versatile. It delivers the most bang for the buck but requires some care and is very heavy to handle. If those are concerns, start with a simple, inexpensive nonstick skillet, which can tackle any job and has the added benefit of being easy to clean. Keep in mind that nonstick pans are not meant to last a lifetime like a cast iron or stainless steel skillet. The nonstick coating wears off over time and can become hazardous if scratched, so replace it every year or two.
- **3-quart saucepan and lid**
- **8-quart stock pot and lid:** Use for soups and stews
- **Baking sheets:** Use for roasting vegetables and baking cookies.
- **9x13-inch baking dish:** An oven-safe essential for casseroles

Miscellaneous

- **Cutting boards:** Frequent cooks tend to have several cutting boards on hand of different sizes and materials. A pair of plastic or composite material boards (one for cutting meats and the other for vegetables, herbs, etc.) should be enough to start. If you only have one board, be sure to always thoroughly sanitize the board after working with raw meats.
- **Can opener**
- **Box grater**
- **Spatula (turner)**
- **Vegetable peeler**
- **Whisk**
- **Wooden or metal spoons**
- **High-heat rubber spatula**
- **Instant-read meat thermometer**
- **Colander**
- **Kitchen scissors**
- **Hot pads**

Wish List Extras

- **Microplane grater:** This is great for fresh ginger and zesting citrus.
- **Blender**
- **Food processor**
- **Salad spinner**

