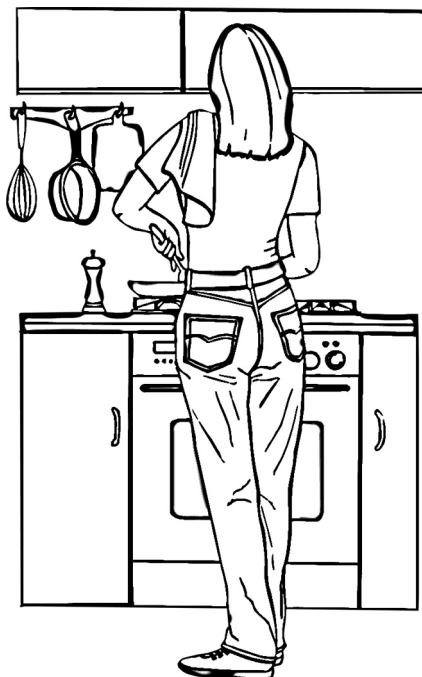


9 Tools of the Trade



The right equipment makes a world of difference. In some cases it can be the difference between the success and failure of a recipe. A variety of tools will allow you to maximize your time in the kitchen by giving you more options for cooking multiple dishes to meet multiple needs. Friends, cooking students, and acquaintances always ask me what brands and tools I recommend.

What follows is our list of essentials. Don't think you have to invest in everything right now. Start with what you have and add to your collection as the need arises and your budget permits. We didn't acquire all of our tools overnight.

For some products, I have listed specific sources for unusual or hard-to-find tools, Don's and my favorite brands, and great buys. If I haven't indicated a brand or store, check kitchen shops or the retail stores in your area and on-line sources. Contact information for stores/brands/catalogs/ is listed at the end of this chapter.

It also pays to search thrift stores, discount merchandise outlets, garage and estate sales to find great tools (often seldom or never used) for a fraction of the suggested retail cost. You might even stumble across some fabulous freebies from friends and family members.

MISCELLANEOUS TOOLS

Some tools seem so obviously essential, yet you would be amazed at how many people I meet who do not own sharp knives, cutting boards, pots with lids, steamer baskets, or basic measuring devices.

Chapter Overview

The kitchen tools you use can be the difference in creating a good recipe and a great recipe. This chapter outlines essential equipment that you should have or should add to your supplies as money permits.

Stainless steel and wood tools are preferable to plastic; they're more durable, safe for hot and cold items, and eliminate exposure to harmful plastic chemicals.

Best knives: 7" Hollow Henkel Ground Santoku Knife (combination lightweight cleaver and all-purpose chef knife) made by Messermeister and sold through Kitchen Classics, \$68 to \$90; Wusthof Santoku and Henkel Santoku, \$84.95 to \$100 from Williams Sonoma and Sur La Table.

NHS Professional Knife, \$52.95; Japanese Caddie Knife, \$18 to \$22; or Mac Superior Knife, \$46.95; from Natural Lifestyle Supplies Mail Order Market, Gold Mine Natural Foods, and Diamond Organics.

Great sharpeners: Chantry Knife Sharpener, \$42, from Kitchen Classics; Global Ceramic Sharpener, \$29.95, and Multi-Edge Diamond Hone Sharpener, \$39.95, from Sur La Table; Chef's Choice Manual Knife Sharpener, \$30, from Williams Sonoma and Sur La Table; Ceramic Knife Sharpener, \$19.99, from Chefs Catalog.

Great guards: 4" sheath, \$1.57; 8" sheath, \$2.50; or The Knife Safe by Lamson Sharp (comes in many sizes), from Broadway Pan Handler, Kitchen Classics, and kitchen shops everywhere. Prices vary with size.

Great cleavers: 8" Chinese Kitchen Knife by Joyce Chen, \$29.95; 8" Chinese Chef's Knife by Dexter/Russel, \$36.95; or Henckels 3-Riveted Pro S Cleaver, \$49.95, all from Cooking.com; Messermeister meat cleaver \$130 from Kitchen Classics.

Great paring knives: Mac paring knife, 4" blade, \$11.95, from Natural Lifestyle Supplies Mail Order Market, others available from Williams-Sonoma, Sur La Table, and Kitchen Classics.

Super shears: Henckels 8" Kitchen Shears, \$24.95; Henckels Twin Kitchen Shears with Carbon Steel Blades, \$39.95; or Diamond Cut Multi-Purpose Kitchen Shears that double as a nut cracker and bottle opener and come with a lifetime warranty, \$5.95, Cooking.com or Aircore Inc.; Come-Apart Shears, \$19.99, Chefs Catalog.

Japanese Vegetable Knife: You'll never really enjoy chopping or cooking until you have good knives. Quality cutlery allows you to cut food faster, more easily, efficiently, attractively, and safely. You don't have to spend a fortune or buy an entire set. One good Japanese-style vegetable knife will do almost everything. We have used them to cut fruits, nuts, meats, and awkward items, like hard winter squashes, for more than 18 years. They're durable, lightweight, and easy to wield.

Look for tempered stainless chrome-moly or high-carbon surgical stainless steel with a 6 1/4- to 7-inch long blade and 10- to 12-inch overall length. Buy a knife with a wood handle and full-tang construction. The latter will keep the knife from coming apart.

Care: Do not put knives with wood handles in the dishwasher, or drop sharp knives into a sink or pan of dishwasher. Wipe a sharp knife with a sponge, rinse, dry with a towel, and return to the cutting board or designated knife drawer.

You're more likely to cut yourself with a dull knife. Sharpen once a week with a rod, stone, machine, or other appropriate device. Some meat shops and kitchen shops will sharpen your knives free or for a small fee.

Knife sharpeners: Most people have difficulty using sharpening rods and standard steels without dulling or damaging their knives. Sharpening with a machine is an easier option. Non-electric machines are inexpensive and easy to operate. You run your knife between 2 tension-mounted sharpening steels that simultaneously hone both sides of the blade at the correct angle.

Knife Guards (sheaths): Plastic guards protect your fingers and knife blades and are better than a knife block that takes up too much space.

Meat cleaver: Use it to cut through bone and cartilage when you chop a whole chicken into fryer parts. Look for a sturdy and wide blade riveted into a wooden handle. Wash by hand and towel dry.

Paring knife: Get 1 or 2 sturdy small knives preferably with full-tang construction. Check with shops and brands listed under best knives.

Kitchen shears: Open packages without dulling good knives. Cut

dried fruits and fresh herbs. Slice raw or cooked poultry and meat without dirtying a cutting board. Get heavy gauge carbon steel—suitable for right- and left-handed use—with thick handles and that come apart for easy cleaning and sanitation.

Cutting board: Get one large, thick, sturdy wood cutting board—preferably 12x18x1-inch—to leave on the counter for daily chopping of vegetables, fruits, and nuts. Get a second wood board with a drip tray for meat, poultry, and fish. Wood boards are more attractive and durable and they won't dull your knives as quickly as plastic boards.

But aren't plastic boards more sanitary? Although they have been touted as being more sanitary, plastic cutting boards trap bacteria, according to a study conducted by microbiologists at the University of Wisconsin's Food Research Institute (Madison). "Tests proved that wood cutting boards are actually so inhospitable to contaminants like poultry and meat juices that bacteria disappeared from wood surfaces within minutes. On the other hand, bacteria from the plastic boards multiplied at room temperature." (Source: *The Food Lovers Tiptionary: An A to Z Culinary Guide with more than 4,500 Food and Drink Tips, Secrets, Shortcuts, and Other Things Cookbooks Never Tell You* by Sharon Tyler Herbst, Hearst Books 1994)

Ceramic crocks: Keep frequently used tools in ceramic crocks on your counter, one near the stove and the other near your workspace for convenience. Lehman's Hardware & Appliances and kitchen shops everywhere.

Mixing and serving spoons: Buy assorted sizes and shapes of wood and metal spoons for mixing, mashing, and serving. Include large and small ladles for soup, stew, sauces, and dressings, salad spoons or tongs, and slotted spoons.

Wire whisk: Look for a small- and a medium-size stiff general-purpose whisk, and a flat whisk for deglazing pans and making cooked sauces. A French or balloon whisk is optional for vinaigrettes.

Spatulas: Get a sturdy metal spatula (pancake turner) for turning burgers, steaks, or chops, serving eggs, etc. Include 1 slotted stainless steel turner. Mini spatulas of the same design are optional. Get at least 2 heat-proof rubber spatulas, one narrow, one wide, for scraping food from saucepans, bowls, jars, blender, or food processor, and a mini spatula to reach into small jars.

Vegetable scrub brush: A small, round, natural bristle brush for cleaning vegetables will cost you a few dollars at most from Natural Lifestyle Supplies or GoldMine Natural Foods.

Vegetable peeler: A new U-shaped peeler with a thick handle for speed and ease of use is great for cucumbers, apples, turnips, rutabaga, beets, nubby looking carrots, etc.

Apple corer: Quickly core apples for Total Juice, baked or dried

Better boards: 16"x12"x1" board, \$18, from Crate & Barrel; 11"x16"x $\frac{3}{4}$ " hardwood board, \$14.95 and 13"x19"x $\frac{3}{4}$ " inch hardwood board, \$19.95, from Natural Lifestyle Supplies; 18" square x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep heavy-duty board with neoprene-padded feet to prevent slipping, \$99.99 from Chefs Catalog. More options available at Cooking.com and kitchen shops everywhere.

Cutting Board Care

Do not soak wood boards or put them in the dishwasher. Clean with a sponge or dishcloth and citrus-based dish soap or all-purpose cleaner and water, then wipe with a towel. Regularly saturate the board with olive, coconut, or block oil. Allow oil to soak in overnight to moisten wood and prevent warping and cracking.

apples, compotes, and fruit leather. Look for a thick ergonomic handle.

Pastry brush: A good-quality pastry brush is handy for greasing baking and roasting pans, and brushing fish, fowl, or roasts with oil. Wash in warm soapy water or the dishwasher (if dishwasher safe) after contact with food, particularly meat, fish, or fowl.

Bulb baster: Baste turkey breasts or whole chickens with pan juices using a hard-plastic baster with rubber bulb.

Funnel: A narrow funnel will help you pour dried herbs and spices into bottles, and soups, stocks, and sauces into jars without making a mess. I prefer stainless steel.

Citrus reamer: Save 20 seconds every time you juice with a wooden reamer. Halve citrus fruit, pick out seeds, and use this tool to quickly squeeze the juice into a bowl. You can also use a hand-held citrus press that comes in different sizes for lemons, limes, and oranges. Sold in kitchen shops everywhere.

Grater: Get a large sturdy box grater for shredding carrots, beets, apples, and zucchini. A microplane grater is a must for finely grating gingerroot and citrus zest.

Garlic press: You can live without one, but if you get one, be sure it has a thick handle to reduce wrist strain.

Trivets: Have half a dozen heavy-duty trivets to keep hot pots and pans from burning counters, table tops, and tablecloths. They can be wood, thick cork, ceramic, tile, or quilted cloth.

Skimmer: A shallow 8-inch wide open-weave basket with a long handle is essential for making parboiled vegetable salads and whole boiled greens.

Metal strainers with handle: Use a large strainer to rinse and drain produce, strain stock or broth, and whole grains, if you use them. Use a small strainer for herb teas or Chicory & Dandelion Root "Coffee". Available from Lehman's Hardware & Appliances or other kitchen shops.

Flame tamer: Also called a heat-deflector, this thick metal plate has tiny holes covering the surface and a sturdy wooden handle. Slip it between a simmering pot and burner on "low" to evenly spread the heat/flame. It reduces heat and prevents burning. This is particularly handy if you have a gas range and/or boil rice, oatmeal, or other grains.

Terrific flame tamer: \$2.99, GoldMine Natural Foods; \$3.99, Natural Lifestyle Supplies Mail Order Market, Kitchen Classics, Sur La Table, and other kitchen shops.

Superb separator: 2-cup size, \$16.95, and 4-cup size, \$18.95 from Cooking.com.

Fat separator: Invaluable for removing fat from meat pan juices without having to chill the liquid overnight. Save and use the cooking juices to moisten greens (sautéed kale, collards, or Brussels sprouts), for reheating leftover chicken, turkey or making a sauce or gravy. Most separator cups are

plastic (which I despise), but glass and dishwasher-safe products are available.

Colander with legs: Stainless steel lasts longer than plastic,

won't absorb odors, or leach chemicals into your food. Use a colander to wash and drain vegetables, fruits, boiled beets, and parboiled vegetables, and to strain stock and bone broth.

Heavy-Duty Oven Mitts: For serious protection against heat, steam, and splatters don't mess with cheap cotton or polyester mitts. Get heavily insulated flame-proof mitts for barbecuing and grilling and moving hot pans into and out of the oven. Mitts rated to 450° F work well even when wet. Keep 2 on hooks near the stove.

Dishtowels: Have at least 7 sturdy, unbleached cotton dish towels. Change them daily.

Cotton placemats: Besides using these at the table, I place 1 under a flow-through salad spinner in the fridge and use several to line the crisper bins to absorb excess moisture and simplify cleaning bins.

Unbleached parchment paper: This works well for lining baking trays for fish, burgers, macaroons, Silver Dollar Sweet Potatoes, and squash halves in order to reduce cleanup and avoid oiling pans. Avoid carcinogenic dioxin bleaches by choosing unbleached parchment sold in kitchen shops and natural foods markets. If you make muffins (best with sprouted whole grain flour), look for unbleached muffin liners. The muffins won't stick like they do with bleached and colored papers, and you'll avoid toxic dyes and bleaches.

Unbleached paper towels: Use cloth napkins, rags, and dish towels as much as possible to reduce paper waste. When you must use paper towel to blot fish or poultry dry before seasoning, use unbleached paper products sold in most grocery and natural foods stores.

Burn cream: Every kitchen needs an exceptional ointment for contact and steam burns—not just a soothing cream, but something that can prevent painful blistering, peeling, and scarring.

MEASURING DEVICES

Instant-read thermometer: This is an absolute must for bread making and testing to tell if a roast is done. Do not leave this thermometer in a roast in the oven; it will break. Insert to test meat, remove if/when you return meat to the oven, and wash well between insertions.

Oven thermometer: Another must is a thermometer that stays in the oven at all times. Test your oven for accuracy. Older ovens may be off by 50 or more degrees, which can ruin a dish. Place thermometer

Perfect protection: Tucker Invincible Retail Oven Mitt, \$12.95 and \$15.95, each from Chefsresource; 12-inch Kool-Tek Oven Mitts, \$12.95 each, 15-inch Pyro Guard Oven Mitt, \$21.95 each, Cooking.com.

Perfect parchment: Order from The Well Tempered Kitchen Store, Island Market Foods, Dorothy McNett's Place, or Kitchen Classics. Average price for 71 square feet, \$4 to \$5.95.

Best burn cream ever: Ching Wan Hung (Chinese Burn Cream). Nearly a decade ago, I accidentally wrapped my entire right hand around the piping-hot handle of a cast iron skillet that had just come out of a 350° F oven. I promptly dropped the pan, began shaking and sweating, and realized I'd received what would have been a third-degree burn. With repeated application of this ancient herbal product, I was able to relax my arm within 4 hours and the pain abated within 8 hours. The next day I was able to hold a chef knife, chop, and teach a cooking class. There was no blistering or scarring. The same product also works for sunburns. Available from Chinese herb shops, such as East Earth Trade Winds, and Chakra 4 Café & Apothecary.

in oven set to 350°F. Check the reading after 30, 45, and 60 minutes. If your oven is hotter or cooler than the temperature you set, you'll know how much to adjust it up or down for baking and roasting. You'll also know when your oven is fully preheated.

Refrigerator thermometer: It pays to keep an eye on the temperature in the refrigerator. A refrigerator thermometer will tell you when your fridge is on the fritz, so you can call a repairman and quickly fetch a cooler and ice. If your refrigerator is not cold enough (between 35° and 40°F), foods will spoil prematurely and you may risk food poisoning.

Measuring spoons: Buy sturdy, heavy-gauge stainless steel measuring spoons that go from 1/8 teaspoon up to 1 tablespoon. I suggest getting 2 sets—at least 1 narrow enough to reach into spice jars—so you can measure wet and dry ingredients without having to stop, wash, and dry in between ingredients, or have 2 cooks working in the kitchen at the same time. Hang spoons on hooks near blender, stove, and cutting board.

Measuring cups: Get a sturdy heavy-gauge stainless steel set of measuring cups that includes 1/4, 1/3, 1/2, and 1 cup measures, and Pyrex 2- and 4-cup sizes, which are also handy for mixing and pouring. Store them in an easily accessible place.

Metal measuring cups are generally for dry ingredients; glass versions are for wet. Metal and glass are more accurate than plastic. They're non-toxic, better for your health and the environment.

Super scales: Salter Chrome Elite Digital Scale, \$49.95, Chefsresource.

Budget options: Soehnle 11-pound Culina or 4-pound Culina Scale, \$19.99, Amazon.com; Salter Housewares Electronic Scale, \$59.95, Sur La Table; Salter Digital Scale, \$69.95, Williams-Sonoma. Also check Kitchen Classics or your local kitchen shop.

Kitchen scale: Many recipes require precision and call for vegetables, fruits, or meats in pounds. Look for a scale that weighs from 1 ounce to 11 pounds. I keep mine on the counter at all times. Digital scales are generally more accurate than spring-loaded scales, particularly for lightweight foods.

Fish pliers: Removing pin bones from fish fillets may seem like a daunting task. Red snapper and salmon are often the worst offenders. The solution? Invest in a new pair of needle nose pliers reserved for food and the kitchen. Better yet, pick up a pair of fish pliers from your favorite kitchen shop. Prices start as low as \$8.

Note: If possible remove bones before marinating or cooking. Run your fingers back and forth across the flesh to feel for bones. Remove them just like you would remove a splinter using a tweezers.

ASSORTED GADGETS

Timer: Get 2 to keep track of cooking times. Store on the counter and discipline yourself to use them.

Steamer basket/inserts: A stainless steel accordion-style open-weave basket with overlapping petals will expand to fill a pot and collapse for storage. It will turn any covered pot or saucepan into a

steamer. Look for 1-inch legs and a central handle that unscrews, so you can place large, flat foods or a heat-proof bowl or dish in the basket to warm leftovers or cook. Double steamers provide twice the capacity in the same pot. You can also use a pot with 1 or 2 steamer/pasta inserts.

Stacking bamboo or metal steamer baskets:

Look for a set of 2 stacking trays that measure at least 10 inches from inside edge to inside edge so you can rest a 9-inch dinner plate on each tray if/when you cook things that might stick or soil the trays. Rest the steamers inside the rim of a wok or over a pot with the same diameter as the trays, then fill pot with 2 or 3 inches of water.

Asian markets frequently sell stainless steel sets that include the pot that sits on the stove. You can use these trays to steam vegetables, reheat leftover poultry, meat, roots, tubers, or grain in heat-proof bowls, or revive dry bread, muffins, and other baked goods wrapped in a cotton or linen napkin. Some also sell a bamboo set.

If you make your own bread and use the recipe for Steamed Buns (See Appendix), you'll need and want at least one 12-inch set of stacking bamboo steamer trays with a lid (2 sets for a double batch).

Oil mister: This isn't essential, but it's handy to add oil judiciously to salads, shish kabobs, fish, chicken breast, sautés, skillet, and baking pans. Fill sprayer with heart-healthy olive oil and avoid commercial chemical-laden vegetable oil sprays. You'll use less oil and avoid unhealthy aerosols.

Salad spinner: Still blotting lettuce dry with paper towels? Save time and paper, and wash salad greens and dry in seconds. By spinning off all moisture from lettuce, spinach, parsley leaves, and other leafy veggies, you'll enjoy crisper greens, extend shelf life, prevent lettuce rust, and help dressing adhere to salad. Separate and rinse a bunch of lettuce, pull cord or turn top, spin dry, then store greens in spinner in fridge for days. A spinner with a flow-through design dries greens more quickly and thoroughly than a unit with a closed top and bottom.

Splatter screen: If you cook lean meat, you won't need this. If you sometimes sear lamb or higher-fat ground beef, this will keep fat from splattering all over the range.

Suribachi: An oversized ceramic Japanese grinding bowl is invaluable for pulverizing toasted nuts, making Gomashio (sesame salt), mashing sweet potatoes or winter squash, emulsifying nut butters, making tahini dressings, Protein-Nut Spread, and nut

Super steamer inserts: RVSP brand 9" collapsible vegetable steamer, \$5.95, 11" folding steamer, \$8; Norpro 8" Double Steamer Insert, \$13.95, from Cooking.com or most kitchen shops.

Super sources for bamboo steamers: 12" steamer set \$22.95 from Kitchen Classics, \$18.95 from Qi Journal.

Economical mister: Brushed aluminum, \$9.99, stainless steel, \$14.99, Misto, or Chefsresource.

First-choice spinners: Emsa Salad Shower Plus with flow-through design, \$19.95, and Zyliss Stainless Steel Salad Spinner, \$34.99, from tabletools.com; Fresh-Spin Automatic Salad Spinner, \$29.95, Williams-Sonoma.

Second choice: Swiss made Zyliss (plastic) Salad spinner, Oxo Good Grips Pump Action Salad Spinner (one-handed operation), or Emsa Salad Washer and Berry Drainer, \$24.95, Cooking.com. Also sold in kitchen shops everywhere.

Super screens: Heavy-duty stainless steel Splatter Guard with Feet by Cuispro, 11 1/2", \$15.95, and 13", \$18.95, Cooking.com. Also sold in kitchen shops everywhere.

Super suribachis: 7" suribachi with wooden pestle, \$9.99, and 9 1/2" suribachi, \$19.95, GoldMine Natural Foods or Natural Lifestyle Supplies Mail Order Market.

butter-based sauces. Suribachis smaller than 7 inches in diameter are impractical.

Food dehydrator: This is your best ally for making homemade beef or turkey jerky, dried fruit and vegetable chips, fruit leather, and dried produce from your garden or farmers' market. An adjustable thermostat is a must! Buy extra add-on trays and fruit roll trays as needed.

Dandy dehydrator: Nesco American Harvest, \$79.95. If your budget permits, an Excalibur dehydrator is highly rated, Excalibur Products, A Division of KBI.

Best salad press: 2½-quart hard plastic press, \$22.95 from GoldMine Natural Foods; 2-quart press \$33.95, 3-quart press \$39.95, Natural Lifestyle Supplies Mail Order Market.

Best popsicle pick: Frozen Pop Mold, \$19.99, Chefs Catalog.

Jerky Press/Jerky Gun: A jerky press or gun is a must if you plan to make ground beef or turkey jerky. It comes with several attachments that allow you to press uniformly shaped pieces that will dry evenly. You can make thin round tubes or long flat strips that are easy to eat and store. Manufacturers that sell food dehydrators usually sell these inexpensive, time-saving tools. Available from Nesco/American Harvest.

Japanese salad press: We use this handy invention when we make coleslaw. Mix shredded vegetables with sea salt, pack into bucket and lock down lid. Leave for 3 to 8 hours or up to 3 days. The combination of salt and pressure causes the vegetables to soften and release water. The press also works for making sauerkraut, Kim-Chee, and pickles.

Popsicle molds: Great for making healthier frozen treats for family members (fun but not essential). These are hard to find.

BOWLS and ASSORTED STORAGE CONTAINERS

We have more than 15 metal and glass bowls plus a dozen heat-proof containers with lids. We use them daily for mixing, serving, and marinating and storing leftovers in the refrigerator. Top with plastic or rubber lids or heat-proof saucers or dinner plates to eliminate the need for plastic wrap, which contains toxic compounds that can leach into foods. After removing plastic or rubber lids, you can transfer bowls from the refrigerator to the toaster oven or a steamer rack for warming, and then to the table, reducing the number of dishes dirtied (and use of a microwave oven). Corningware Pop-Ins and Classics are heat-proof, freezer-proof, and stack well.

Wide-mouth jars: Invest in at least 2 dozen pint and 1 or 2 dozen quart Mason jars for storing chopped, raw, or parboiled vegetables, salad dressings, marinades, sauces, raw or roasted nuts, dried fruits, compotes, iced herbal tea, broth, stock, and assorted leftovers.

Benefits:

- (1) Wide-mouth glass jars are inert, non-toxic, and won't give off chemical fumes or hold residual flavors or odors from previously stored foods.
- (2) They're easy to line up in the side door and shelves of the fridge and cupboards.
- (3) Contents are easily and quickly identified.

(4) Vibrant colored vegetables, fruits, and nuts will invite you to eat more wholesome foods.

(5) They're inexpensive.

Also save nut butter and mustard jars, and bottles from condiments you no longer use.

Spice jars: Buy 2 or 3 dozen dark amber jars with labels for the tops and sides. Dark glass protects herbs and spices from light, which causes oxidation, loss of flavor and fragrance. We use at least 2 dozen herbs and spices on a weekly basis for flavor, added vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and numerous health benefits. If you cannot find dark jars, use clear jars but store them in a cupboard or pull-out drawer to protect them from sunlight.

Heat-proof and freezer-proof custard cups and storage containers:

Get at least a dozen assorted clear heat-proof bowls and 8-, 12-, 16-, and 32-ounce freezer and heat-proof Pyrex or Corningware bowls for storing, serving, reheating, and/or freezing single, double, or larger portions of leftovers. Heat-proof square and oblong Pyrex baking pans with snap-on lids are handy for marinating, baking, and storing meats without plastic or foil and for roasting then refrigerating vegetables, or baking and storing apples or sweet potatoes in the same container.

Mixing and storage bowls: Invest in inexpensive and durable stainless steel nesting bowls and Pyrex mixing bowls. Glass and Pyrex are important for storing foods that contain acidic ingredients, i.e., tomato sauce, marinades, anything with vinegar, lemon, lime, orange juice, or wine. Bowls may be used for mixing, marinating, storing, and serving cooked fryer parts, roasts, root vegetables, stews, compotes, and salads, or stashing chopped vegetables in the fridge.

Get at least 1 (preferably more) 8-, 12-, 16-, 24-, and 32-ounce bowl. Snap-on lids for smaller bowls are ideal. Bowls without lids may be topped with saucers or dinner plates and stacked in the fridge.

Invest in 6-, 8-, and 12-quart stainless steel bowls for washing leafy greens, and making large tossed salads, parboiled greens, and parboiled salads. If you make bread, you'll need them for mixing and kneading.

Thermos bottles: Get a 16-ounce stainless steel thermos for each household member for transporting hot soup, stew, as chilled smoothies, and Frosty Fruit Whips (see Index for recipes). Smaller insulated pint-size food containers will hold other food items; get them if you'll use them.

You can also pack smoothies, blender puddings, or other snacks in thick black HDPE plastic containers, which are more stable than

Savvy spice jars: Order 4-ounce amber spice jars with caps and labels from a wholesale co-op buying club or retail mail order outlet; 12 for \$17.60, Frontier Co-Op.

Versatile containers: L'Ovenware, Corningware Classics and Pop-Ins with rubber lids, which are removed before transferring container to oven, and heat-proof square, round, and oblong baking pans with snap-on lids.

Top thermos: Nissan Stainless Steel 9.5 ounce Wide-Mouth Snack Jar, \$22.95, 16.9 ounce Travel Mug Food Jar, \$26.95, GoldMine Natural Foods and Natural Lifestyle Supplies Mail Order Market.

Fab food tins: 5½"x8" Bento, \$39.95, from Natural Lifestyle Supplies Mail Order Market and Asian markets.

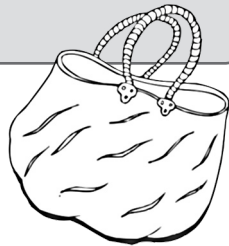
soft plastic. Stash them in an insulated lunch tote with reusable ice packs.

Stainless steel lunch boxes: Stainless steel "Bento" (Oriental) lunch boxes are wonderful for packing meals for work or school. Look for oblong tins with individual clamp-on lids or a set of 2 or 3 stacking stainless steel containers with a metal handle that locks them together for traveling. Food sits directly in these tins, which are also handy for storing and heating leftovers. Pack foods that need to be warmed in one container and foods to serve cold in another. Stash them in an insulated lunch tote with utensils, a cloth napkin, and a dry ice pack. Use cellulose (plant-based) bags with twist ties to replace plastic bags.

Cellophane bags: 100 percent plant-based biodegradable, non-toxic bags that seal shut with twist ties, \$8.95 and \$9.95 (small and large), from Natural Lifestyle Supplies Mail Order Market.

Canvas and cotton tote and produce bags: Invest in a dozen small and large cotton, linen, or canvas shopping bags. They're stronger than plastic or paper and will last for years. Keep some on a hook or doorknob in the kitchen, by the front door, and in the car. Stuff fresh produce and other items from the farmers' market into these bags.

Cool cloth bags: Canvas grocery bags, \$8 each or 3 for \$21, cotton produce bags 3 (12x12) and 2 (8x8) bags, \$18, Tomorrows World; canvas tote bags \$8 each or 6 for \$46, Giam/Harmony Inc. Many environmental groups will give you a sturdy tote bag for a \$15



Filled with fresh, perishable produce—kale, collards, mustard greens, broccoli, lettuce, cucumbers—the bags can go directly into the refrigerator. Produce will keep longer and stay fresher in breathable bags than in plastic. Bags filled with less perishable items—onions, sweet potatoes, or apples—may be set on the floor, hung on hooks, or emptied into wire baskets or ceramic, pottery or glass bowls. Don't worry about getting the bags dirty with sandy vegetables, beets, or purple cabbage; they're machine washable and will last for years.

ESSENTIAL POTS and PANS

Sauce pots and pans: Look for heavy-gauge stainless steel; the thicker the better to reduce burning and facilitate cleanup. Insulated handles and an extended warranty are ideal. My essentials include a 1-cup and a 2-cup saucepan, two 1 1/2-quart, one 2 1/2-quart, and one 3-quart saucepan for steaming, simmering, boiling, stewing, and parboiling.

Other essentials include an 8-quart and a 12-quart stockpot for making stock and Bone-Building Broth, and a 3 1/2- to 4-quart enamel-lined cast iron or stainless steel Dutch oven for sautéing large batches of sturdy greens, making stews, roasts, casseroles, and compotes.

Skillets: Heavy-duty stainless steel pans are a must. They should include one or two 8-inch skillets, one 10-inch sauté pan, and at least

one 12- to 13-inch sauté pan. You'll need 1 tight fitting lid for each pan. Skillets with all-metal handles and lids are ideal for transferring a pan to the oven.

Baking pans: A large collection of baking pans will allow you to bake or roast several dishes simultaneously. I use them to toast nuts, roast vegetables, and store freshly purchased meat or packages of meat transferred from the freezer to the fridge. I usually keep at least 2 pans on the meat shelf of the refrigerator to prevent cross contamination and keep the refrigerator clean.

My essentials include one 8x12-inch glass, ceramic, or stainless steel baking pan, two 13x19x2-inch stainless steel roasting pans, two 8- or 9-inch square or round stainless steel baking pans, and two 10-inch deep-dish glass pie plates.

Roasting pan with lid: You'll need at least 1 roasting pan with a lid to roast 1 or 2 chickens or turkey breasts, a whole turkey, or a beef, pork, or bison roast. A roasting rack keeps rich roasts above the pan juices.

OPTIONAL EXTRA PANS

Loaf pans: If you regularly make meatloaf, get a 9x5-inch stainless steel or Pyrex loaf pan. This is also handy for defrosting and safely storing packages of fish or meat in the fridge. A glass lid is optional but desirable for baking vegetables or storing meatloaf.

Cast iron skillets: Cast iron skillets are invaluable for sautéing, stir-frying, roasting, or broiling, as well as toasting seeds on top of the range. See next page for instructions on how to care for cast iron skillets.

Waterless cookware: These pans need less oil for cooking. They retain flavors, vitamins, minerals, and moisture, while reducing shrinkage. Heat-channel design bonds aluminum alloy between two or more layers of stainless steel for efficient, even, rapid heat distribution without burning. This eliminates the need for high temperatures, saves energy, and cuts cooking time and cleanup. They can be used in the oven or on the range top to bake meatloaf, roasts, potatoes, sweet potatoes, chicken, etc. Non-breakable, stay cool handles reduce the risk of injury.

Egg poacher: Poaching is one of the best ways to cook eggs and this handy tool helps turn out perfectly shaped, gently cooked eggs with minimal cleanup. You can use a conventional saucepan, but a tough film will

The best saucepans, skillets, and

stockpots: Heavy-duty stainless steel pots, pans, and skillets with tight-fitting lids and sturdy, stay-cool handles are important for even heat distribution, reduced sticking, ease of cleanup, safety, and durability. Some of my favorite brands include Cuisinart, All-Clad, Multi-Clad, and Neova. All but the Neova are sold in kitchen shops and Chefs Catalog.

Super stainless steel baking pans:

For hard-to-find pans without non-stick coatings, contact Natural Lifestyle Supplies Mail Order Market. 8" square cake pan, \$7.95; 9" round cake pan, \$7.95; 12"x14" cookie sheet, \$9.95; 8¾"x4½" loaf pan, \$9.95; 13"x9"x2" baking pan, \$19.95; 15½" x10½"x1" jelly roll pan, \$19.95. Check local kitchen shop or the cookware department of chain stores.

Best cast ironware: 3-piece skillet set, \$27.95; 5-quart Dutch Oven, \$28.95; 9" round skillet, \$9.95; 10½" square and round skillet, Lodge Manufacturing or Lehman's Hardware & Appliances, Kitchen Classics, Williams-Sonoma, and Sur La Table.

Cookware for life: VITA-MIX Neova Cookware sets start at \$279 and come with a lifetime guarantee. Free ground shipping worth \$25 when you use this code to order: 06-001266.

Second choice: Williams-Sonoma Waterless Cookware with lifetime warranty.

Good egg poacher: Norpro 10-inch Stainless Steel Egg Poacher, \$34.95, from Cooking.com; 10-inch Korona Stainless Steel 5-Egg Poacher, \$34.95, Amazon.com.

Seasoning a new cast iron skillet:

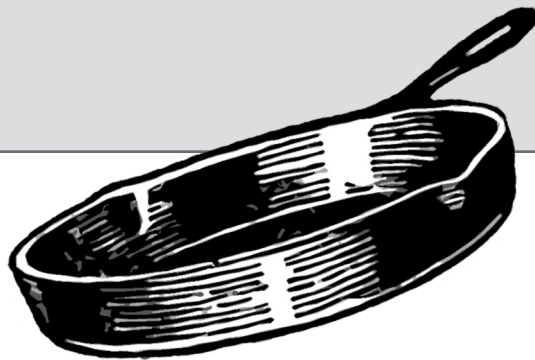
- 1) Warm the cookware then peel off label.
- 2) Wash with mild, soapy water (no abrasive detergents) and a stiff brush; rinse, and dry thoroughly.
- 3) Coat cookware with a thin layer of coconut or olive oil.
- 4) Warm pan, then spread the oil over the entire surface, including all corners, with a clean cloth or unbleached paper towel.
- 5) Place pan in oven and heat to 300 to 350°F for 30 to 60 minutes. Remove from oven while warm; pour off excess oil. Wipe pan with a cloth or paper towel, and store.

Note on enamel-lined cast iron skillets: There is no need to season these pans such as the ones made by Le Creuset. Wash and clean them with non-abrasive sponges and dish soap and air dry or dry with a towel. Do not heat them when they are empty.

Cleaning cast iron: Do not put cast iron skillets in the dishwasher. Do not soak unless absolutely necessary to remove crusty baked on food. Wash with a sponge and running water. Towel drying is sufficient only for enamel-lined cast iron. Dry a wet cast iron skillet over medium heat on the stove top. After drying, lightly oil.

Using cast iron cookware: Use moderate rather than high heat. Use little or no water when cooking in a newly seasoned cast iron skillet and avoid cooking acidic ingredients, such as tomatoes, or vinegar, unless combined with a larger volume of non-acidic foods. Uncover hot foods after removing them from the stove, otherwise the steam may remove the protective layer you created when you seasoned the pan. Over time, a cast iron skillet will turn black. This indicates the pores are sealed. If rust builds up, the pan was improperly seasoned or it was used to cook acidic foods.

Treating a rusty cast iron skillet: Scrub off as much of the rust as possible with a wire-bristle brush and rinse well. Repeat steps 1 to 5 for seasoning a new cast iron skillet.



build up on the bottom of the pan. You can buy an egg-poaching insert to use with one of your own skillets or a complete set that includes a skillet with its own insert. We prefer egg poachers without non-stick coatings. Poachers that cook 4 to 6 eggs are \$35 to \$40 new; inserts cost less but are more difficult to find.

APPLIANCES

These tools can help you prepare foods more quickly, make them more attractive, or last longer.

Range/stove: If you have the option, buy or convert to a gas stove and range top to reduce your exposure to electromagnetic radiation and make your food taste better. Gas provides better and faster temperature control so you're less apt to burn food. Burners are ready to use instantly and you always have visible feedback. Chefs prefer gas ranges for a good reason.

Convection toaster oven: It takes less time to preheat a convection toaster oven than a conventional full-size oven. The convection oven surrounds food with an evenly heated airflow, saves energy, retains more of the natural flavors than a microwave, and alleviates the risk of radiation leaks. Convection mode cooks and reheats up to 30 percent faster than a regular oven or toaster oven. Roast or bake a cut-up fryer, half a dozen chicken breast halves or 4 to 6 sweet potatoes while you eat breakfast, shower, and dress. Broil 4 fish steaks or turkey burgers while you toss a salad, or roast a 3 1/2-pound turkey breast or 3-pound beef roast without firing up a full-size oven.

Blender: Buy one with a glass container and ice-crushing mode. Container should be wider at the top than bottom to effectively purée frozen or dried fruits. You'll probably use it daily (unless you have a Vita-Mix) for smoothies, Frosty Fruit Whips, blender puddings, salad dressings, marinades, grinding nuts, and blending soups. Beware, cheap blenders burn out quickly with vigorous use.

Home drinking water filtration device: Tap water contamination is a major problem in America. The Environmental Working Group and other health-related organizations recommend the use of a home drinking water filter.

Best system: For more than 15 years we have used the Multi-Pure Home Drinking Water System to filter the water we use for both drinking and cooking. This solid carbon block system is NSF and UL certified to remove one of the widest ranges of contaminants. Multi-Pure's 880 model is the only solid carbon block system that is NSF certified to reduce arsenic.

Multi-Pure point-of-use systems range in price from \$199.95 to

Super stoves: Lehman's Hardware & Appliances and kitchen stores.

Convection toaster ovens: Cuisinart Convection Toaster Oven/Broiler, \$179.99; Black and Decker Dining-In Convection Toaster Oven & Broiler \$149.95, Cooking.com; DeLonghi Airstream Convection Toaster Oven that doubles as food dehydrator, \$159.95, Gourmet Kitchen Store, and all major cooking shops.

Best blenders: Waring Professional Bar Blender, \$99.95 to \$139.95, Cooking.com, Kitchen Classics, Williams-Sonoma, and Sur La Table. Also check discount merchandise outlets. If finances permit, upgrade to a Vita-Mix.

\$575.95. Multi-Pure also makes a combination reverse osmosis and solid carbon block system for water supplies that require multiple treatment technologies; it sells for \$699.95.

For comprehensive information about water filtration technologies, how to choose the best system for your needs, and how to order a Multi-Pure, e-mail us at PlanetaryPress@earthlink.net or write to us in care of Planetary Press, P.O. Box 97040, Phoenix, AZ 85060-7040.

One-and-only source: Vita-Mix. Models from \$369 (reconditioned) to \$449 (new). For FREE ground shipping worth \$25, mention Rachel's code when you order: 06-001266.

Spice Mill: \$19.99, Cooking.com, Krups USA, and kitchen shops everywhere.

Savvy slicers: Boerner Original V-Slicer, \$40, Minuteman Trading LLC.; Kyocera Ceramic Kitchen Slicer, \$25, and De Buyer Stainless Steel Mandoline, \$169, Williams-Sonoma; Benriner Vegetable Slicer, \$24.95, GoldMine Natural Foods.

Super durable slow cookers: Rival Crock-Pot Slow Cooker.

Vita-Mix: Unlike other juicers, this high-speed, multi-purpose machine makes low-glycemic Total Juices, which leave in fiber, vitamins, and minerals that extraction juicers remove. It also replaces a blender, food processor, ice crusher, grain grinder, and several other appliances. After burning out 3 blenders in 9 years, we finally got a Vita-Mix. It's easier to clean than a blender, juicer, or food processor, and the blades never need sharpening.

Coffee-spice mill: Use this to grind whole spice seeds for the freshest flavor and best fragrance. If your family members use one for coffee, buy a second grinder dedicated to spices.

Note: To clean the inside of container between spices, add 1/4 cup of baking soda, cover, and grind, then empty.

Mandoline/kitchen slicer: Quickly cut vegetables into julienne for steaming or stir-frying, or make fancy waffle shapes for dipping, or thin rounds for salads or dehydrating. The easy-to-operate machine requires no electricity, and takes up less space than a food processor. Look for one with an easy-to-assemble upright stand that holds attachments, has a safety lock and safety vegetable holder to protect your fingers while you slice.

Chest freezer: You're going to be eating a lot of fish, fowl, and meat. If you're buying grass-fed beef, pastured poultry, stocking up on in-store specials, or going through a lot of frozen fruit, you'll want to buy in bulk. If you hunt, fish, or have joined a co-op buying club, an extra freezer is essential. Look for a second-hand unit to save money.

Slow cooker: Cook a chicken, fryer parts, a turkey breast, roast, or stew while you work, work out, or shop. Bake stuffed apples while you clean house or run errands. Mull cider for a crowd. Save time and energy. Slow cookers come in a variety of sizes and shapes. A 3 1/2- or 5-quart model will be most versatile. Removable stoneware inserts are easier to clean than one-piece models. Glass lids are preferable to plastic because glass won't absorb odors or release toxic chemicals.



Source List for Tools of the Trade

Aircore Inc., Dijon Enterprises, PO BOX 306, Dickson, TN 37056, (888) 957-8573,
www.aircore-cookware.com

Amazon.com, www.amazon.com

Broadway Pan Handler, 477 Broome Street, New York, NY 10013, (866) 266-59273 or
(212) 966-3434, www.broadwaypanhandler.com

Chakra 4 Café & Apothecary, 4773 N. 20th St., Phoenix, AZ 85016, (602) 283-1210,
www.Chakra4.com

Chefs Catalog, PO Box 620048, Dallas, TX 75262, (800) 338-3232, www.chefscatalog.com

Chefsresource, 22732-B Granite Way, Laguna Hills, CA 92653, (866) 765-CHEF or
(800) 765-2433, www.chefsresource.com

Cooking.com, 2850 Ocean Park Boulevard, Suite 310, Santa Monica, CA 90405,
(800) 663-8810, www.cooking.com

Crate & Barrel Catalog, 1250 Techny Road, Northbrook, IL 60062,
store locator: (800) 996-9960; order line: (800) 323-5461, www.crateandbarrel.com

Diamond Organics: The Organic Food Catalog, P.O. Box 2159, Freedom, CA 95019,
(888) 674-2642 or (888) 674-2642, www.diamondorganics.com

Dorothy McNett's Place, 800 San Benito Street, Hollister, CA 95023, (831) 637-6444,
www.happycooker.com

East Earth Trade Winds, PO Box 49315, Redding, CA 96049-3151 and 1714 Churn Creek
Road, Redding, CA 96002, (800) 258-6878, email: eetw@snowcrest.net

Excalibur Products, A Division of KBI, 6083 Power Inn Road, Sacramento, CA 95824,
(800) 875-4254 or (916) 381-4254, Fax: (916) 381-4256, www.excaliburdehydrator.com

Frontier Co-Op, 3021 78th Street, PO Box 299, Norway, IA 52318, (800) 669-3275,
www.frontiercoop.com

Giam/Harmony Inc., 360 Interlocken Boulevard, Suite 300, Broomfield, CO 80021,
(800) 869-3446, www.giam.com

Gold Mine Natural Foods, 7805 Arjon's Drive, San Diego, CA 92126, (800) 475-FOOD (3663),
www.goldminenaturalfood.com

Gourmet Kitchen Store, PO Box 414, Kresgeville, PA 18333, (888) 304-2922,
www.gourmetkitchenstore.com

Island Market Foods, PO Box 307, 9740 S.W. Bank Road, Vashon Island, WA 98070,
(206) 463-2446 www.islandmarketfoods.com

Kitchen Classics, 4041 E. Thomas Road, Phoenix, AZ 85018, (602) 954-8141,
www.kitchenclassics.com

Krups USA, PO Box 3900, Peoria, IL 61614, www.krupsusa.com

Source List for Tools of the Trade

LamsonSharp, 45 Conway Street, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370, (800) 872-6564,
www.lamsonsharp.com

Lehman's Hardware & Appliances, One Lehman Circle, PO Box 41, Kidron, OH 44636.
(330) 857-5757, www.lehmans.com

Lodge Manufacturing, PO Box 380, South Pittsburgh, TN 37380, (423) 837-7181 or
www.lodgemfg.com

Minuteman Trading LLC, PO Box 328, Boyce, VA 22620, (540) 837-2451,
email: minutemn@vissuallink.com

Misto, 8 Trobridge Drive, Bethel, CT 06801, (888) 645-7772, www.misto.com

Multi-Pure Corporation, Las Vegas Technology Center, PO Box 34630, Las Vegas, NV 89133,
(800) 622-9206. For product information contact Don and Rachel Matesz, Independent
Distributors c/o Planetary Press, P.O. Box 97040, Phoenix, AZ 85060-7040,
email: PlanetaryPress@earthlink.net, or call (602) 840-4556.

Natural Lifestyle Supplies Mail Order Market, (800) 752-2775, www.natural-lifestyle.com

Nesco American Harvest, (800) 288-4545, 1700 Monroe Street, Two Rivers, WI 54241,
www.nesco.com

Qi Journal, 26151 Carancho Road, Temecula, CA 92590, (800) 787-2600 or order on line at
<http://qi-journal.com>

Rival Crock-Pot Slow Cooker, 32 B. Spur Drive, El Paso, TX 79906, (800) 557-4825,
www.crock-pot.com

Sur La Table, 1938 Occidental Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98134, (800) 243-0852,
www.surlatable.com

Tabletools.com, 223 South Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212, (888) 211-6603,
www.tabletools.com

Tomorrows World, 9659 First View Street, Norfolk, VA 23503, (800) 229-7571,
www.tomorrowworld.com

VITA-MIX, 8615 Usher Rd., Cleveland, OH 44138-2103, (800) VITA-MIX or (800) 848-2649,
www.vitamix.com

The Well Tempered Kitchen Store, 122 Atlantic Hwy, Waldoboro, ME 04572, (207) 563-5762
or (207) 563-6242, www.welltemperedkitchen.com

Williams-Sonoma, 3250 VanNess Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94109, (800) 541-2233,
www.williamssonoma.com