

Kitchen and Cooking Tools

Having just a few basic tools can make cooking easier and fun! Don't worry about buying all of these pieces at once; instead start with a few basic pieces and add more when you are able.

These kitchen and cooking tools are just suggestions on where to start. Think about your own kitchen and cooking preferences. What tools would you want to prioritize? Are there additional tools not listed that would make cooking easier or more fun for you? Tailor your list as needed.

Start with a large knife, cutting board, and something to cook with—a skillet, sheet pan, or pot.



Large knife



Cutting board



Skillet



Sheet pan



Pot

Add tools that you will use often.



Can opener



Silicone spoons



Wooden spoons



Spatula



Thermometer



Small paring knife



Glass measuring cup



Mixing bowls



Measuring cups



Potholder



Storage containers

These items may be tools you can live without, but could make cooking easier or more convenient. As you learn what you like to cook, start building your own wish list.



Box grater



Whisk



Pastry brush



Tongs



Colander



Serrated knife



Ladle



Steamer basket



Crock pot



Vegetable peeler



Instant pot



Blender



Food processor

Keep Basics on Hand

Having ingredients you will use often on hand can save you time and money. Think about the recipes you will want to make regularly. Are there ingredients you could keep on hand? What other recipes could you make with those ingredients? Having a game plan and items on hand can help make cooking easier!

Everyone's on-hand ingredients will be unique, but here are some ideas to get you started with Cooking Essentials. Make it your own by editing this starter list with items you enjoy.

Oils



Oils are used widely in cooking all over the world. From salad dressing to roasting, oil is a common ingredient found in many recipes.

- Olive oil
- Canola oil
- Sesame oil

Most oil should be stored in a cool, dark place. This prevents the oil from going rancid—or tasting unpleasant.

Acid



Acidic ingredients add brightness to many recipes by balancing out other flavors. The sour flavor we get from acidic ingredients helps to contrast sweet flavors and balance saltiness of a dish. Depending on your flavor preferences, you may want to start with lighter amounts of acid and add until your dish is delicious to you.

- **Citrus:** Lemon, lime, orange
Fresh citrus juice will have a more pronounced flavor
- **Vinegars:** Rice, balsamic, apple cider, red wine

Salt



Salt is a quintessential ingredient in most cooking and baking. Salt adds more to a dish than just saltiness—it helps to tone down bitter flavors, balances sweet and sour notes, and helps create structure to baked items.

- **Kosher salt**
- **Soy sauce or Tamari**
- **Brined foods:** Olives, capers

Herbs and Spices



Having herbs and spices on hand will help you dial in the flavor of a dish to your personal preferences. Buying small amounts of new spices will help you experiment with unique flavors without breaking the bank.

- Chili powder
- Cinnamon
- Cumin
- Curry powder
- Basil
- Ginger
- Oregano
- Paprika
- Red pepper flakes
- Thyme

Dry Goods



Dry goods—or shelf-stable items—are key ingredients to keep on hand. Many of these foods will make up the bulk of a recipe—add filling amounts of fiber and protein that will keep you satisfied longer.

- **Grains:** Brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, quinoa, oats
- **Canned beans and legumes:** Black beans, chickpeas, kidney beans
- **Nuts and seeds*:** Almonds, walnuts, peanuts, chia seeds, flax seeds, sunflower seeds
- **Canned or jarred foods:** Tuna, salmon, chicken, tomatoes, tomato paste

*Store your nuts and seeds in the fridge or freezer. This helps to protect the healthy fats within from going rancid.

Other



Depending on your flavor preferences there may be foods that you like to keep on hand.

- Honey
- Dijon mustard
- Dried fruits
- Hot sauce
- Sriracha or Sambal