

AFM News and Views
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Please enjoy these articles highlighting household essentials. With many of us cooking more than ever these days, perhaps it's time to upgrade a few of your own items, or maybe you can tuck away a few of these ideas for future gift-giving!

Taking Stock

source: Tribune News Service

By Ben Mims

When most people ask me what is the essential, basic equipment I recommend they keep in their kitchen, I typically tell them, "You won't like the answer." That's because they're usually looking for the sleekest, coolest, most graphically stunning pieces, and well, that's just not my priority.

After spending more than a decade cooking in restaurants and test kitchens where I tried out and used virtually everything there is that slices, sautes or snips, I prefer my equipment as bare-bones, utilitarian and easy to clean as possible.

Below are my brand-specific recommendations — no endorsements, just ones that have stood the test of time and use in my kitchen, the majority of which are very inexpensive.

- **Knives** (chef's, paring, serrated): The best way to find out which brand is best for you is to go to a cooking wares retailer and hold every type of knife in your hand, miming as if you were cutting something. Whichever is the most comfortable is the brand you buy, period. If you don't ever put it in the dishwasher and keep it sharp, it'll last forever. The knives I reach for every single day are my 8-inch chef's knife from Misen and my paring knife from Zwilling.
- **Stainless 3-quart saucepan:** I prefer the sturdy All-Clad d5 pot because the bottom is made of five layers of metal — with an extra layer of stainless steel — for even heat distribution. You can boil pasta for one or two or make soup for four to six. This make of a 3-quart saucepan isn't cheap, but it will last the rest of your life.
- **Large nonstick skillet:** I always grab a high-quality nonstick pan, whether I am searing steaks, stir-frying vegetables or scrambling eggs. Calphalon's 12-inch skillet is the one I love — it's also oven-safe — but buy whatever model is comfortable in your hand and large enough for what you cook on a daily basis.
- **Plastic cutting board:** I keep a set of quality plastic boards from OXO to use on a daily basis. They're light, they're easy to clean in my small apartment kitchen sink, and the rubber bumpers keep them from sliding around on the counter.
- **Rimmed baking sheets** (halfsheet pans): Roasting might be the most common cooking technique in my kitchen — it's so easy to throw food on a baking sheet with some oil and seasonings and let the oven do the work. Chicago Metallic's pans are the restaurant standard, and they're very affordable — I advise you buy three or four and use some for heavy-duty high-heat roasting while others are reserved for baking cookies.
- **Tongs:** Whether you need to toss and serve salad greens or snatch mozzarella sticks from the deep fryer, you'll want a simple pair of tongs for both jobs.
- **A set of metal bowls:** Small, medium and large mixing bowls are called for a lot. I prefer metal because they're lighter and easier to handle than glass. I've had my set from Winco for over a decade.
- **A set of graduated dry measuring cups and spoons:** The simplest, plainest ones are best because they'll be easiest to clean and are most efficient at measuring dry ingredients. I like the simple 4-piece metal cups and 4-piece spoons made by Vollrath.
- **1-cup liquid measuring cup:** I've yet to find one that beats the practicality of the classic Pyrex 1-cup glass model.
- **Wooden spoons:** It really doesn't matter what brand; what matters is that you can use them for everything and in every pan without worrying about damaging nonstick, cast iron or

enameled surfaces. Wash them immediately after use and let them air dry completely before you put them away and they'll last for years.

- **Whisks:** The one I reach for the most is OXO's 9-inch whisk. It's got the strongest wires that never bend or warp, and the ergonomic black rubber handle fits the best in my hand.
- **Silicone spatulas:** I like the GIR brand mini spatula the most for getting into tight corners and its good-for-everytask size, but I also often use the larger spoonula for times when I want to scrape and scoop.
- **Digital instant-read thermometer:** I prefer OXO's digital model.
- **Kitchen shears:** I use a model from Wusthof (you have to buy it with a paring knife), but any pair that comes apart for cleaning and fits most comfortably in your hand is the one you want.
- **Vegetable peeler:** I like the Y-shaped ones like the affordable plastic models from Kuhn Rikon, which are what I recommend for beginner cooks, although I use the harder-to-find classic French Castor model.
- **Citrus reamer and Microplane:** A simple wooden citrus reamer will get the most juice out of your lemons, limes and oranges. And a Microplane grater — I prefer the model without a handle — will get all the zest off easily and efficiently.

The Household Item That Couples Regret Not Registering for at Their Wedding

source: Southern Living

Luckily, the results of a new national survey are providing some insight into what married couples want, based on what they would—and would not—register for again. In a recent poll of 500 adults who'd registered for wedding gifts within the past six years, Pennsylvania-based Erie Insurance found that the most common regret couples have is regarding something they didn't include on their list: a robotic vacuum cleaner. According to the survey, just 17 percent of respondents report actually registering for the household staple, while a significant 58 percent of those who didn't wish they had. (And in case you're wondering, nearly 90 percent of those who received the gift are still very happy with it.)

MONTHLY CONTEST

2020 is the Year of the vision. So, this year, we are going to do some eye trivia. We will pick a random winner each month among the correct answers we receive.

This Month's Question: What pigment is found in the iris that determines eye color?
Please email your responses to julia.b.lamere@lpl.com

RESULTS OF LAST MONTH'S CONTEST

Question : How many eyes does a bee have?

Answer: Five

Last month's winner: Lil LaCost

WEEKLY UPDATES ARE AVAILABLE

LPL Financial's **Weekly Market Commentary** and **Weekly Economic Commentary** can be found on LPL Financial's website (http://www.lplfinancial.com/learning_center/research/).

OTHER UPDATES AVAILABLE FROM LPL RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

- Daily market update: <http://LPLresearch.com>
- YouTube Channel: <http://www.youtube.com/lplresearch> (which can also be found on our website)

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Don't keep us a secret!! Share this with your family and friends.

Till next month,

The Alltrust Team

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