

## Basics

### Utensils

You will need a variety of kitchen tools



to make the recipes in this book. I will give suggestions for the most necessary measuring and preparing utensils and then later will talk about the various appliances used for recipes in this book.

At the end of this section is a checklist with items most needed to make the recipes in this book, some items that make the recipes convenient, and tools that no kitchen buff could live without!

The suggested utensils for each recipe illustrate how I have achieved the best results. In many instances, recipes can be made using a different size pan than suggested. An appliance with a similar function can be used in place of the one given in the recipe. No rules of cooking in my kitchen are etched in stone. There's always room for experimentation. Try it in your own!

### Measuring

For each cook, measuring ingredients is different. A set of measuring spoons is a good addition to your kitchen if you like to maintain regularity in the flavor of your favorite dishes. If you are a cook who likes to follow every direction precisely (*never using anything but what is called for in the recipe*), you will need a set with a least 1-tablespoon (tbl.), 1 teaspoon (tsp),  $\frac{1}{2}$  &  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. For larger measuring a 1 or 2 cup Pyrex-style measuring cup is a necessity. They are

great for making broth – an integral part of many recipes.

Also nice for measuring dry ingredients are cups in  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups size.



### Chopping & Slicing

It is a good idea to have several different sizes of knives because different cutting jobs require different types of blades. I sold kitchen knives at one point during college, and I have to agree with the company I worked for then...Cutco knives happen to be the best knives I have ever worked with. Unfortunately, Cutco knives are not available in any store. They must be bought through a home salesperson, kind of like Kirby vacuums. Cutco knives remain sharp indefinitely (when treated properly), and can cut through frozen meat and chicken bones with ease. I've recently purchased Pampered Chef knives, and I like them as well. One of the most important items to keep in mind when buying quality knives is the handle. Be



sure that the tang of the blade runs the full length of the handle and is secured in place with at least three rivets as pictured above. Good quality knives are not cheap by any means. A set of Cutco knives in a block such as above could easily run into the \$500 - \$800 range back in 1993. Ten years later, I couldn't say what high quality Cutco knives could go for. To this day, after twenty years of use, my knives are as sharp as they ever were. Nothing beats a quality knife. Once you've had a quality blade in your hand and prepared vegetables for

the sauté pan, you'll never go back to dollar store or Ginsu crap!

**Butcher Knife:** This knife is best used for larger items such as onions, potatoes, steaks, chicken pieces with bones, and large fruits like watermelon and cantaloupe. Because you can put a lot of weight and pressure behind the blade of this knife, it makes big jobs a lot easier.

**Utility Knife:** When you have a more delicate job like slicing a tomato into paper-thin slices, this is the time for a utility knife. You can control the tip of this knife for smaller cuts where precision is required.

## Pots & Pans

Though a full set of pots and pans is very useful, often times space does not allow for storage of these items. If you don't have a lot of room, you can cook quite nicely with a small baking dish, cookie sheet, 10-inch skillet, and a 3-quart saucepan. One pan you should save



space for is the muffin pan. Nothing else can take its place. Normally these pans come in half dozen or dozen groupings. Nowadays, you can find all sizes from the typical standard muffin cup to jumbo cup and mini-muffin size which are quite popular. These pans are invaluable to a family with children, especially for whipping up cupcakes for parties! If space permits, one each of the aforementioned items in a larger size will greatly increase your possibilities for group cooking.

For baking, glass and ceramic pans work best when baking chicken and fish. If you are making large casseroles or baking whole chickens, a 5-quart "dutch oven" style of pan has a larger capacity and can prevent oven spills. For muffins and other pastries, muffin tins, layered cake pans, and spring form pans are all needed.

Several different sizes of skillets in your kitchen can speed up cooking times. If you are making two recipes, you can sauté the vegetables in one pan, while browning meat in another, without having to wait for the pan. It is also nice to have several saucepans available in different sizes.

In my kitchen, I have yielded storage space to a pot that I find VERY useful...a

stockpot. It is large enough to take a 10-12 lb turkey after Thanksgiving for a batch of soup or lasagna



noodles standing straight up and covered by a few inches of water. It's a little hard to wash in my kitchen sink, but it is well worth it when I am boiling potatoes for mashed potatoes or potato salad for large gatherings. Chili in this pot is easy!

## Appliances

Though sometimes very specialized in their purpose, these can make your kitchen tasks much easier, especially for big parties and holidays.



**Wok:** This is the preferred method of cooking for most of the oriental dishes in this book. You can substitute a 12-inch skillet for most dishes, but once you've cooked in a wok, you'll never want to go back. It is the most used pan in my whole kitchen.

**Barbeque:** Most recipes in this book that are made with boneless chicken or beef can be made on any style barbeque. However, the whole chicken should only be cooked on a large covered grill.

**Blender:** A common appliance (*usually the only one besides a microwave in most college homes*) is used in many recipes to chop and finely blend sauces, and puree fruits in many recipes.

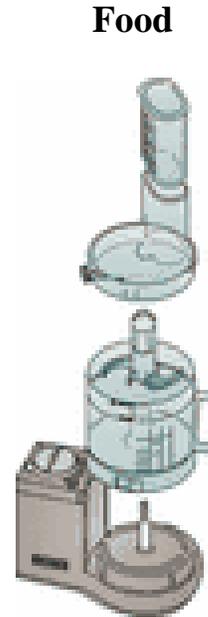
**Crock Pot:** You can really save yourself a lot of work on long and busy days with a crock-pot. Slow cooked meals are great. If you leave them in the morning on low, many chickens or roasts can take 6-10 hours to cook fully. Just start it before you leave in the morning, and dinner is ready when you come home!

**Electric Mixer:** One of the most used appliances in this cookbook, you will need this for evenly blending



batters for cakes and pastries. Though it is possible to blend many by hand, more strenuous tasks like whipping egg whites to form stiff peaks really require

a mixer. A hand held model is easier to use, and takes up much less space than the older style attached mixer-bowl units.



**Food Processor:** This appliance can be used in many different recipes in this book for chopping, slicing and grating. It can make large jobs a little easier. Although it is only called for specifically in a few recipes, I actually use it a lot more. My guess is that if you have one, you can figure out where to use it too!

**Fondue Dish:** Just because polyester leisure suits went out, doesn't mean we should throw out everything the 70's stood for. Fondue is still a great social food you eat around a table or as an appetizer for a party. Though everyone is watching their cholesterol these days, people still can't resist dipping food into a cheese sauce. Besides, cooked meat dipped in fondue sauce is Atkins friendly! Not that I give a hoot about that diet. To me bread is life!



**Microwave Oven:** We should all find the person who invented this appliance and thank them profusely. I've had one in my household since I was a little girl and have become

accustomed to using it almost daily. A microwave is perfect for melting butter in a Pyrex measuring cup, or for heating a dish at the last moment. I've even used this to make my Pseudo Egg McMuffins by scrambling an egg and some cooking oil in a thick coffee mug, then nuking it for 45 seconds. Although most people use it for popcorn or

**Pizza Stone:** Another utensil having a specialized use. If you really enjoy good pizza, this is a great way to create your own masterpiece! This hot stone allows you to cook pizza with a wonderful crust, plus add your favorite sauces and toppings. I also have a large pizza pan which works well.

**Rice Steamer:** A rice steamer is great if you enjoy a lot of oriental food and have the storage capacity for an appliance like this. You can make rice at the touch of a button, but some rice makers don't allow you to add seasoning to cook with the rice. Choose the right kind of cooker for your tastes.

**Toaster Oven:** Until I had a toaster oven, I never truly understood all that I was missing. These handy dandy appliances are by far one of the most useful in the entire kitchen besides the microwave and the wok. This is perfect for making 'melt' sandwiches like the Tuna Melt, or for baking small appetizers. The toaster oven works wonders when the main oven is handling the main course, like a turkey or casserole that must be maintained at a certain temperature. I make appetizers like Stuffed Mushrooms or Nachos in the toaster oven while the main course bakes elsewhere. Since the toaster oven is basically portable, I have also taken it on vacation with me when I was

traveling across country and would be staying in many motels. This is perfect to bake quick Pillsbury cinnamon buns for a hot fresh breakfast, even if the motels offer what they call a Continental one, I prefer my own in the privacy of my own room. Nothing gets people out of bed like the smell of fresh baking buns.

# Kitchen Checklist

## Preparation Tools & Other Utensils

### **Necessary**

Measuring spoons  
Measuring cups  
Butcher knife  
Utility knife  
Cheese grater  
Can opener

### **Helpful items**

Potato masher  
Whisk  
Garlic press  
Melon baller  
Hard boiled egg slicer  
Tea ball  
Apple corer/slicer  
Peeler  
Chef knife  
Paring knife  
Spatula knife  
Rolling pin  
Pizza slicer  
Tongs  
Large long handled fork  
Assorted cooking spoons &  
spatulas (metal, wooden, &  
plastic)

### **Some things a serious chef just won't cook without**

Wire cheese slicer  
Turkey baster  
Meat mallet  
Meat thermometer  
Pastry blender  
Graduated funnels  
Candy thermometer  
Marinating dish  
Mortar & pestle  
Zester

## Pots & Pans

12-inch skillet  
10-inch skillet  
2-quart saucepan  
3-quart saucepan  
5-quart saucepan  
8 x 8 baking dish  
13 x 9 baking dish  
Baking sheet

1-quart saucepan  
Pizza pan  
Au gratin dishes  
9 x 2 baking dish  
Bread pan  
Glass pie plate  
Cake pans  
Sieves (fine screen & course)  
Vegetable steamer pot insert

## Appliances

Microwave  
Toaster (Toaster oven)  
Wok

Electric mixer  
Barbeque  
Blender  
Crock-pot  
Mandoline slicer

Bread machine  
Chaffing dish  
Deep fryer  
Dehydrator  
Fondue Dish  
Food processor  
Pastry proofer  
Pizza Stone  
Rice Steamer  
Waffle Iron