

ESSENTIAL KITCHEN TOOLS FOR THE BEGINNER COOK

There are so many recipes you can create with just a basic set of utensils. The following are the ones I return to time and again and know I couldn't manage without them!

Your tools do not need to be exactly the same as mine - they just need to do the same job.

To give an idea of size I have placed a 10p piece in some of the photo's.

	<p>Sharp Knives 9cm, 12cm and 18cm</p> <p>Good quality sharp knives are one of the most important tools to have. Although you must be extremely careful when using them, the sharper the knife the safer it is to use. This is because you don't need to exert pressure to cut through items and it is therefore less likely to slip.</p>
	<p>Knife Sharpener</p> <p>Your lovely sharp knives won't remain sharp forever. With use they will blunt. So pressing your knife down and dragging through a simple knife sharpener like this will make them like new again.</p>
	<p>Large Serrated Knife (Bread Knife)</p> <p>It is the serrated edge of this knife that makes the job of cutting into bread so much easier. It doesn't tear the bread and flatten it. Also useful for cutting cake.</p>
	<p>Spatula</p> <p>A spatula does the same job as a wooden spoon. The advantage with a silicone spatula is that it's flexible and can really clean a bowl of cake mixture out well. Silicone is also heat resistant so can be used to stir hot ingredients.</p>
	<p>Set of Measuring Spoons</p> <p>These are an absolute necessity when baking as precise measurements are needed. They contain tablespoon, teaspoon, half teaspoon and quarter teaspoon measurements. You can buy metal or plastic versions.</p>
	<p>Peeler</p> <p>This Y shaped peeler is the easiest type to use. You can use it to quickly and easily peel a thin layer from the outside of vegetables and fruits.</p>
	<p>Tin Opener</p> <p>Many tins now come with a ring pull which does make life a whole lot easier - but you will occasionally still need a tin opener. A tin opener that attaches to the top of the tin is the safest and easiest to use especially if you are left handed.</p>



Tongs

Tongs are invaluable for safely turning foods whilst cooking on the hob. Give them a quick wash and they are ready to help serve your cooked food.



Flat Slice

Very useful for frying eggs and serving potato wedges as well as delicate items such as fish.



Sieve

A metal sieve has much finer holes than a colander. A sieve is useful for such things as icing sugar and cocoa powder.

It is also useful as an additional colander when draining small amounts of vegetables or rinsing kidney beans under the cold water tap.



Grater

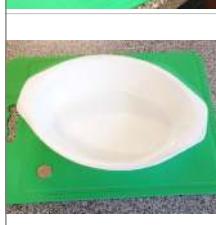
Graters come in various shapes and sizes. I find this version easy to hold by the handle and then grate my carrots, cheese etc against one of the four choices of hole sizes. You can even use this to finely grate lemon zest.



Measuring Jugs 250ml and 600ml

These two sizes are perfect when first starting out.

A pyrex (glass) jug is more versatile than a plastic one because it is heatproof and stable so you can safely use it to measure boiling water.



Medium Oven Proof Dish (1.5 litres)

This is a nice size to have - I use it for many things, from fruit crumbles to fish pie.



Digital Kitchen Scales

AN ABSOLUTE MUST HAVE!

All our recipes are shown using digital kitchen scales - they are simple to use and very accurate which is vital, particularly when baking.



Chopping Boards (Green, Red, Blue, White)

To avoid cross contamination of foods (such as raw meats) you should use a different coloured board for each food type.

Red - Raw Meat

Green - Fruits and Vegetables

White - Cooked Meats

Blue - Fish



Colander

The purpose of colander is to drain water from cooked vegetables, rice or pasta. Place it in the sink and allow the water to drain through the holes. A colander has larger holes than a sieve.



Small, Medium and Large Saucepans, with lids

Saucepans are usually bought in sets - each one a different size with a matching lid.

As a minimum I would suggest a small (16cm), medium (19cm) and large (21cm) saucepan.

I prefer non-stick saucepans as they are easier to clean and food is less likely to stick to the bottom.



Frying Pan - (approximately 20cm)

I like to use non-stick frying pans. This size is perfect for omelettes, frying eggs and cooking pancakes.



Large Frying Pan (with lid)

A large frying pan is useful for cooking larger quantities of food. It also doubles up well as a wok to stir fry food in and the addition of a lid makes it even more versatile.



2 Baking Trays

These measure approximately 24cm x 34cm.

They have a small lip all around the outside which makes them more versatile than a baking sheet which is totally flat. Baking trays are used in both sweet and savoury recipes. If you don't have non-stick versions you can line them with baking parchment.



Large Roasting Tin or Dish

Perfect for Chicken Traybake, Roast potatoes or Meats as well as baked dishes such as Lasagne. If you have a heavy based tin you can also make your gravy directly on the hob. (Thinner metal can bend and warp over direct heat so you may need to make gravy in a saucepan instead)



Kitchen Scissors

It is a good idea to have a pair of kitchen scissors to open packets and cut baking parchment.



Baking Parchment

This is another must have. You will at some point need to line a tin or tray to stop the food from sticking. As you throw the used parchment away it also makes cleaning up easier.



Mixing Bowls (Small, Medium and Large)

Different size mixing bowls are perfect for so many jobs, weighing foods and beating and mixing. Ideally they should be pyrex (glass) bowls which are sturdy and heatproof so you can also melt things over boiling water. Pyrex is a good all round product in cooking.



Oven Gloves

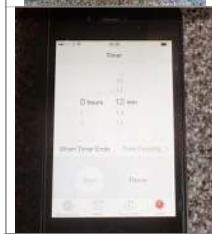
ESSENTIAL PIECE OF KIT!

You cannot remove items from the oven without a pair of these. Try to get a good quality, thick pair so they absorb as much heat as possible.



Heatproof Mat/Board or Trivet

A heatproof mat or board will be necessary to protect your worktop from the high heat of dishes and trays that have just come out of the oven. I use a silicon mat as it goes back in my drawer when not in use.



Digital Timer (or smart phone)

You will often be working with precise timings and it is important to have a bell/buzzer to alert you when the time is up. I have relied on the wall clock in the past and burnt so many things!