



# Kitchen Essentials

In the past 12 years, I have lived in seven cities. I have gone from a 300 sq metre mountain house to an 80 sq metre flat in New York City. In this same time, I have worked in massive commercial kitchens, where we had any and every gadget we could possibly want, on a farm in Connecticut, where my hands became my best friend, and every scenario in between. Knowing what is needed in a kitchen is second nature to me now.

## The essentials

Bowls  
 Rubber spatula  
 Whisk  
 Meat thermometer  
 Cheese grater  
 Scale  
 Peeler  
 Strainer  
 Fish spatula  
 Measuring spoons  
 Can opener  
 Measuring cups  
 22cm (9-inch) non-stick pan  
 Cast iron pot with lid  
 Non-stick sautee pan  
 Sheet tray

There are so many commercials and cooking shows that make it seem like you need everything to make an amazing meal, but you don't.

To start you need a **set of bowls** of varying sizes. You will use this for mixing, weighing and sometimes serving your food and ingredients.

My favourite tool in my kitchen is the **rubber spatula**. Its primary purpose is to help scrape out every morsel of deliciousness from your bowls. The best use is to make eggs and preventing things from sticking or burning in your pan. You want a good quality high heat brand like Vogue. This way it will last a long time and you don't have to worry about plastic bits melting into your food.

Next up is a **wire whisk**. Whether you are making pancake batter, whisking eggs or making a roux, this is necessary.

I use a **meat thermometer** every single day. It is the only way to prevent over or under cooking of meat.

A **cheese grater** can be used for its intended purpose, as well as grating vegetables or making zest.

The only way to be consistent in a kitchen is by using a **scale**. Often people will tell me that the first time they made something it was perfect, and every other time it was slightly different. This is because measuring cups are flawed. How much you fill the cup today might be different from how you fill it tomorrow.

You need a **peeler** for your vegetables and fruit to remove the skin without removing the good bits.

A **fine mesh strainer** can be used to strain your pasta and potatoes, sift flour or strain purees to keep them smooth. Essentials should always have multiple purposes.

A **metal fish spatula** is great because it bends, allowing you to get under anything in your pan.

You will always need **measuring spoons**. I suggest metal ones with a ring to keep them together.

A **can opener** is a must. I try to limit use from a can, but there are just some things that I can't get around like condensed milk for my pumpkin pie! It's also dual purpose because they typically also sport a bottle opener.

As much as I preach against **measuring cups**, most American recipes still use them. They also serve as great tools in which to measure your ingredients.

“Essentials should always have multiple purposes.”



I always think it's best to have a variety of **baking pans**, but I find that the 22cm x 33cm (9 x 13 inch) pan is the most useful. It can be used for most things from a roast to making brownies or macaroni and cheese. Somehow, most recipes seem to fit in this pan.

Having a **cast iron pot** can not only save your life, but also make a drab meal amazing, and can be used for so many things. The best use is for slow cooking meat like osso buco, pulled pork or a pot roast. It is the best thing with which to make caramelised onions. You can also use it for things like boiling water or heating soup. This is also the best way to fry chicken. It is a 'many in one pan' and that's why I love it. I would recommend Le Creuset, which in my opinion, is the best brand.

Everyone needs a good **non-stick sauté-pan**. I would recommend getting two; a 20cm (8 inch) for things like eggs and a large one for all-in-one dishes.

Finally, you need a **sheet pan**, also known as a **baking tray**. Preferably non-stick. You will use it so much that you will thank me.

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### The non-essentials essentials

Kitchen Aid  
Vitamix  
Slow Cooker

A **KitchenAid** is a tried and true kitchen companion. They last a long time and come in different sizes, so you can find the right one for your kitchen. Vitamix is, in my opinion, hands down the best blender on the market, whether you are making baby food or smoothies. You can even make hot soups and margaritas! Plus, they come with a good warranty.

A **slow cooker** is the ultimate time-saver for the busy bee, the cooking challenged or those just wanting to be able to cook without stress. You simply put everything in the pot, set the timer and walk away for four to eight hours. No matter what you put in it, it magically turns out to be delicious and tender. Look for one that has both the slow cooking and steaming functions because you will get more use out of it this way.

It's great to know what you need, but none of this matters if you don't know where to get it from.

### Time to shop

**Argos**  
for everyday things

**John Lewis**  
for appliances & crockery

**Harrods**  
for speciality cake pans/pots

**Nisbets**  
for wholesale prices and practical but not stylish

**Columbia Flower Market**  
for a leisurely Sunday and cute knickknacks

**www.Wineware.co.uk**  
for great glassware

