Kitchen Equipment and Utensils

Below you will find a list of kitchen equipment. I would start off by purchasing just a few of these items, and build slowly. I would buy the cast iron pan, one of the non-stick pans, the knives, a few wooden spoons, a peeler, a can opener, a food thermometer, a spatula, a pyrex dish, three stainless steel bowls, and the measuring spoons.

**Cookware**

12” Cast Iron Pan by Lodge--OK its heavy, so what, this will only matter four times(when you pick it up to use it, when you pour something out of it, when you go to clean it, and when you put it away. It will last you a lifetime. Make sure you use hot water and a hard scrub brush to clean it. No soap please, dry well, 1 tea of oil rubbed in pan before you put it away. This is not too much to ask for something that costs $30 and will last longer than you.

Non Stick Saute Pans-I would buy two: a 12” T Fal and a nearly 8” Sitram.

Sauce Pot-I love my two quart All-Clad pot. Thankfully, this was given to me as a gift. I’ve cooked with the Farberware Millenium Stainless Steel pot once. So, I can’t tell you whether it is extremely durable. It felt pretty durable. I would buy this one because it is half the price and just as good as my All Clad.

Dutch Ovens-I got a Le Creuset Round Dutch 7qt for a gift--I love it for large batch cooking--It is pretty, too. It is expensive. Tramontina makes a cast iron enamel for a 1/4 of the price. I haven’t used it, so I don’t have an informed opinion on this one. I wouldn’t purchase either if you are just starting out. It looks pretty good on a buffet.

Double Boilers-Buy a decent bowl that fits into a decent pot and you have a decent double boiler without having to pay a cent. Meaning spend your money on the pot and the bowl not the fancy,shmancy double boiler.

Stockpot-12 Quart. Wider is easier to deal with than thin and high ones. Stainless steel is a good investment, and take a look at the handles to make sure they are not flimsy. I wouldn’t go high-end on this item. There is a decent one for around $30.

**KNIVES**

Chefs Knife-8”(easier for many) Two thoughts on this. The lightest, cheapest, best knife I own is a Victorinox Fibrox--it does the job well and the knife can be sharpened easily. I, also, own a German Wusthof knife which is 10” long, heavier, more expensive, and very well balanced. I must admit, I grab my cheaper knife more often.
Serrated Knife - Victorinox Fibrox makes a good one of these too. I wouldn’t buy anything expensive because it will eventually grow dull and you won’t sharpen it.

Paring Knife - Tough one for me. I like Henckels 4star 3” paring knife ($25approx.) for its handle. Kuhn Rikon makes one with a color you will easily spot in the kitchen for half the price and Victorinox makes one for $5. They’ll all suit you well.

TOOLS
Cuisinart Hand Mixer-7speed - I use this mixer all the time when I have a small task to conquer. I enjoy how they start with a little bit of power to get them going.

Silicone Spatula - Heat Resistant is best for stirring hot items and also sturdier than the hard plastic kind.

Wooden Spoons - I don’t like the sound of metal on metal. Who does, anyone? I feel more engaged with the cooking process when I use a wooden spoon, something homey about it. I look for a sturdy spoon that is made of hard wood that isn’t going to crack where the handle meets the top. The thicker it is and less tapered the longer it should last. A nicer wooden spoon isn’t going to cost you much—unless you commission your artist friend to carve you one. I like French Olive Wood or American Cherry Wood Spoons. DO NOT, sorry, put these spoons in the dishwasher.

Smooth Cut Can Opener - I like the safety features on these types of can openers, I’m a little scared of can edges, this will eliminate them. OXO makes some decent can openers, including one not as safe with a magnet for picking up the lids. Make sure you are sanitarily safe by cleaning the can opener. Can openers in commercial kitchens have a reputation for being the one thing in a kitchen most infected with bacteria.

Blender - You can spend a pretty penny on a blender. A Vita-mix blender has a fine reputation in the industry. I’m not spending $500 on a blender. I like the Kitchen Aid 5 speed blender. I’ve had it for two years without an issue. I like it for its power and the way the carafe sits on the motor. I’ve read a few reviews that are negative. You can find negative reviews by consumers for just about everything.

Colander - You usually pour off a great deal of water and food into a colander. So, look for these 3 things before purchasing: 1) the holes can’t be too big for food to go through it; 2) make sure its stainless steel and footed so it looks good and doesn’t wear away; and 3) it’s capacity is at least a gallon. Oops, 4) the cost isn’t over $35.

Ladles - I would buy a 4oz ladle because it is the “just right” size for a number of kitchen tasks. The end of the handle should be curved in a way that makes it easy to hang, test this before you buy it.

Food Thermometers: You want to purchase a thermometer that is digital and instant read (meaning it only takes a limited amount of time to get an accurate reading, like 10
seconds.) The best one will give you sticker shock. I would wait until you get frustrated that your drawer is filled up with crappy, inaccurate old ones before you invest.

**Spatula**-Look for one that is thin, off-set, heat resistant and lets liquid drip through quickly. Don’t break the bank on this item, please.

**Bowls**-Buy a few stainless steel bowls of various sizes, that you can nest inside each other. I wouldn’t go too thin. I wouldn’t purchase any with rubber feet, just use a towel to stabilize bowls.

**Baking**

**Baking Pans**-Buy a 18”x13”x1” pan that is strong, and a little heavy. You should not be able to bend it. It will bake evenly and last a long time. Repeat after me, “I will not buy a baking pan that is non-stick. I will not buy...” You’ve got the message, I hope. This notion goes for a roasting pan, too.

**Measuring Spoons**-I like stainless steel because they are stronger, odorless, and stain resistant(duh!!) than plastic measuring spoons. I don’t like how the plastic ones feel. Consider how the handle goes into the bowl, the smoother transition the better for leveling off dry ingredients. Many are made in an oval shape which is good for digging into spice jars to a certain extent, and less desirable for liquid measurements. Also, look to see how the spoons attach to the ring. I have well made stainless steel spoons that are always falling off the metal ring, drives me crazy. Come to think of it, so do key rings. Who would have imagined that so much goes into evaluating a measuring spoon. I gotta relax.

**Measuring Cups**: See Above.

**Pyrex**-I love pyrex because you can monitor your food as it cooks. And, it does a great job at incredible prices. I have bought several 9” pie plates and 13” x 9” baking dishes and they have cooked well for me. The one thing you need to concern yourself with is making sure you handle them well. They can chip a little bit and leave sharp edges over time. Also, make sure you monitor the change in temperature closely. You don’t want extreme fluctuations in temperature and do some research on using them in the microwave. Truthfully, they are not as sexy as some bakeware, pyrex gets the job done better than most.

**Whisks**-Make sure you get one with a solid handle and somewhat thin, well spaced wires. I wouldn’t purchase a flat one, an overly heavy one, or a “new age” style whisk with its spokes and wires to one side.

**Rolling Pin**-Find one with good weight that feels good in your hands.