

Essential Tools (and Ingenious Gadgets)

Decades of testing have taught us what every well-equipped kitchen should have. Here are our favorite tools—plus a handful of other useful gadgets. BY SARAH SEITZ

THE MUST-HAVES

These models are the best of the best in their respective categories.

Bench Scraper

Dexter-Russell 6" Dough Cutter/Scraper—Sani-Safe Series (\$7.01)

➤ Its sharp beveled edge cuts, scrapes, and scoops with ease.



Can Opener

Fissler Magic Smooth-Edge Can Opener (\$29.00)

➤ It tidily removes lids; plus, its long handle offers great leverage.



Coarse Grater

Rösle Coarse Grater (\$35.95)

➤ This flat paddle with grippy feet can grate over any surface or bowl.



Colander

RSVP International Endurance Precision Pierced 5 Qt. Colander (\$25.99)

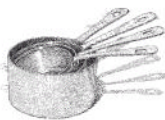
➤ Tiny, all-over perforations drain water quickly but don't allow food to slip through.



Dry Measuring Cups

Amco Houseworks Professional Performance 4-Piece Measuring Cup Set (\$14.95)

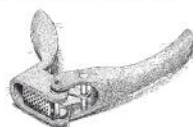
➤ Long, clearly marked handles make the "dip and sweep" method easy.



Garlic Press

Kuhn Rikon Stainless Steel Epicurean Garlic Press (\$39.95)

➤ Conical holes produce a fine, uniform mince for even flavor. Easy to squeeze and clean.



Instant-Read Thermometer

ThermoWorks Splash-Proof Super-Fast Thermopen (\$96.00)

➤ So fast and easy to use, you'll wonder how you ever lived without it.



Kitchen Shears

Kershaw Taskmaster Shears/Shun Multi-Purpose Shears (\$49.95)

➤ These shears are sharp enough to butcher chicken yet nimble enough to trim pie dough.



Ladle

Rösle Hook Ladle with Pouring Rim (\$34.00)

➤ The Rösle's angled handle offers control when reaching into any pot.



Liquid Measuring Cup

Pyrex 2-Cup Measuring Cup (\$5.99)

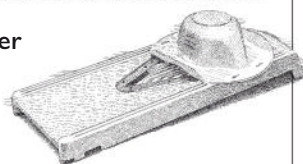
➤ It's everything you need: sturdy tempered glass etched with clear, fade-resistant markings.



Mandoline/V-Slicer

Swissmar Börner Original V-Slicer Plus Mandoline (\$29.99)

➤ It can slice faster and more precisely than a skilled chef with a knife.



Measuring Spoons

Cuisipro Stainless Steel Measuring Spoon Set (\$11.95)

➤ The oval bowls of these spoons fit in small jars and are flush with the handles for level measuring.



Metal Spatula

Wüsthof Gourmet Slotted Turner/Fish Spatula (\$34.95)

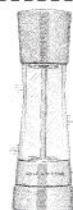
➤ The best tool for sliding under fish—not to mention cookies, pancakes, and roasted vegetables.



Pepper Mill

Cole & Mason Derwent Gourmet Precision Pepper Mill (\$40.00)

➤ The grind size selection is simple, it loads easily, and its transparent body shows the fill level.



Rasp Grater

Microplane Classic Zester Grater (\$12.35)

➤ With minimal effort, it grates wisps of cheese or citrus zest and makes paste of garlic or ginger.



Salad Spinner

OXO Good Grips Salad Spinner (\$29.99)

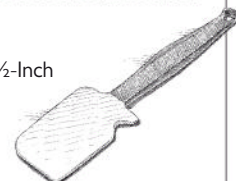
➤ The OXO dries greens more thoroughly than any other model.



Silicone Spatula

Rubbermaid Professional 13½-Inch High-Heat Scraper (\$18.99)

➤ Its firm-but-flexible edge scrapes as well as it stirs.



Timer

American Innovative Chef's Quad Timer (\$29.95)

➤ This perfectly accurate timer is sleek and solidly built. You set the time with a dial, not buttons.

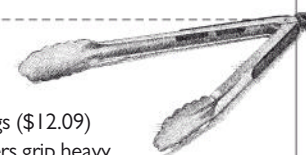


Tongs

OXO Good Grips

12-Inch Locking Tongs (\$12.09)

➤ The shallow pincers grip heavy roasts as easily as they do slender asparagus spears.



Vegetable Peeler

Kuhn Rikon Original Swiss Peeler (\$3.50)

➤ This lightweight, cheap peeler skins anything from dense butternut squash to knobby ginger.



Whisk

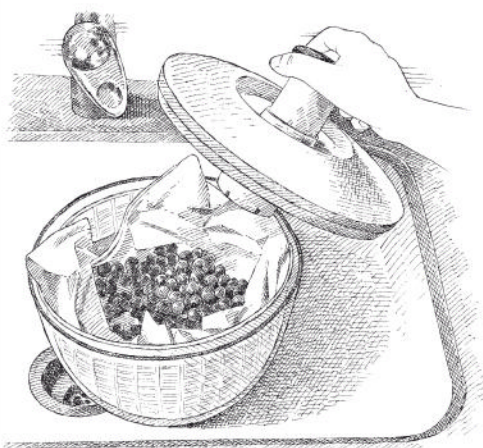
OXO Good Grips 11" Balloon Whisk (\$9.99)

➤ This lightweight model features a long handle that won't slip into bowls or pots.



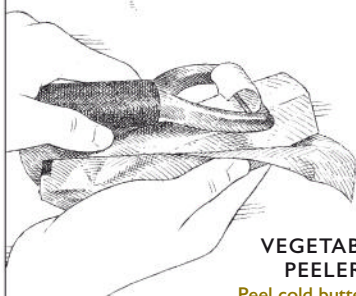
CLEVER USES FOR CORE TOOLS

Some of our favorite tools have hidden talents.



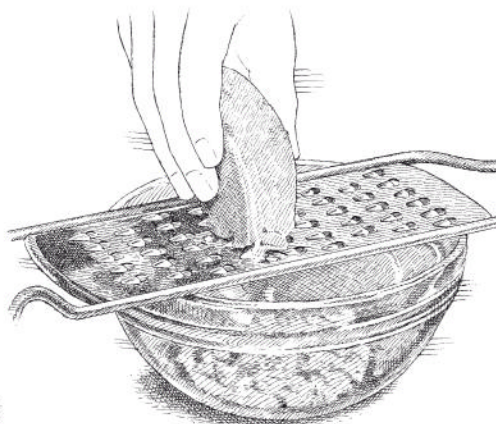
SALAD SPINNER

Thoroughly but gently dry berries and herbs by spinning them in a paper towel-lined salad spinner.



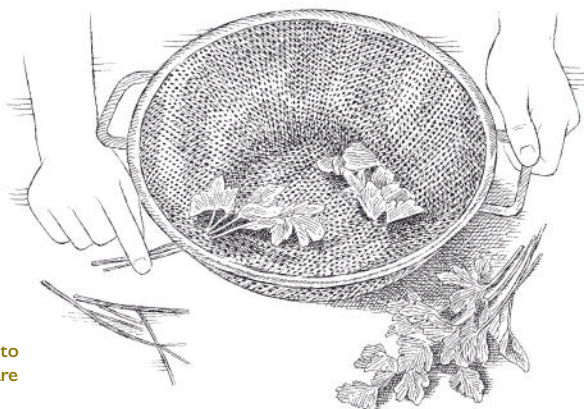
VEGETABLE PEELER

Peel cold butter into thin ribbons that are easy to spread.



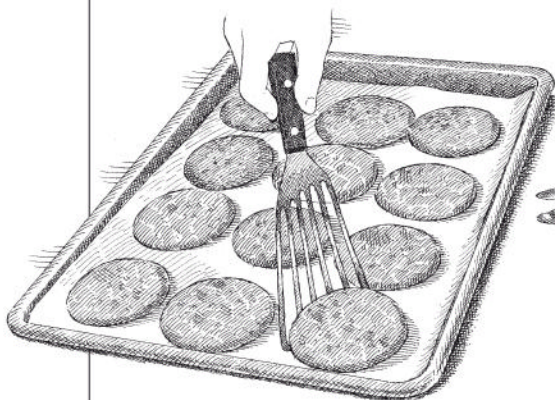
COARSE GRATER

Break down a rock-hard block of brown sugar by shaving it along the grater's sharp holes.



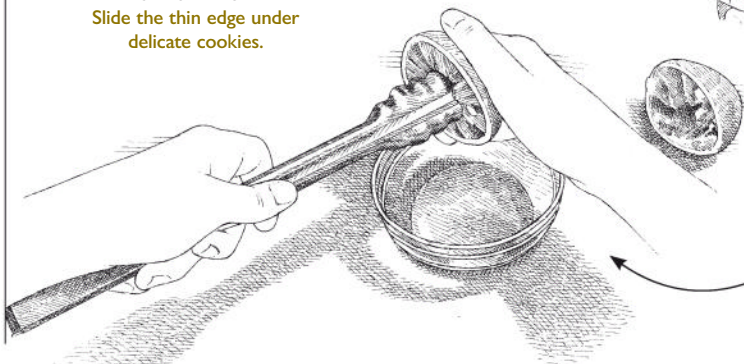
COLANDER

Pluck herbs by pulling the stems through the colander's tiny holes.



FISH SPATULA

Slide the thin edge under delicate cookies.



TONGS

Open a bottle by sandwiching the cap between the handles and gently pulling to pop it off.

Extract citrus juice by holding the tongs closed, sticking the pincers into the halved fruit, and twisting.

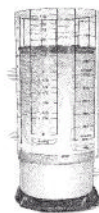
GADGETS WORTH BUYING

We've tested hundreds of quirky gadgets over the years, but only a handful have stood out as useful.

Adjustable Measuring Cup: KitchenArt Adjust-A-Cup Professional Series, 2-Cup

Price: \$12.95

Why It's Worth Owning: This clear plastic barrel with measurement markings and a plunger insert makes it easy to measure—and extract—semisolid or sticky ingredients like mayonnaise, honey, or peanut butter. Simply draw back the plunger to the desired marking, fill the cup, and then push forward to eject the ingredient—no fussy scraping necessary.



Boil-Over Prevention: Kuhn Rikon Spill Stopper

Price: \$24.95

Why It's Worth Owning: This bowl-shaped flexible silicone lid (which doubles as a splatter guard) has six central flaps that open just enough to let milk foam flow over its surface, where it is contained by curved edges. It's dishwasher-safe, but it cleans up almost as easily by hand.



Bowl Anchor: Staybowlizer

Price: \$19.95

Why It's Worth Owning: This two-sided silicone gadget solves the problem of mixing bowls that spin or rock on the counter, leaving our hands free to whisk oil into vinaigrette, beat eggs, or mix cookie dough.



Jar Opener: Amco Swing-A-Way Jar Opener

Price: \$5.99

Why It's Worth Owning: By using a combination of traction and pressure, this model releases the vacuum on jars of all sizes and loosens tight threads on plastic lids. It also works well on previously opened jars.



Wine Aerator: Nuance Wine Finer

Price: \$19.95

Why It's Worth Owning: This long, tube-like aerator improved wine's flavor and aroma without the usual wait for the wine to breathe. It slides into the neck of the bottle, leaving only a pouring spout for neat, hands-free aerating.

