



Foodservice Equipment, Supplies and Design

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Cooking Equipment

Purchasing Guide

As a foodservice operator, you have a general idea of the equipment needed to get through the busiest times of the day. However, if you're starting a new restaurant, there could be a few pieces of equipment you may have overlooked. As you are reading up on cooking equipment, keep in mind that each type has a wide range of options available with varying features and pricing.

Remember to speak with your Sales Consultant for any questions on which features are best for your establishment as well as the two costs associated with every purchase – the cost to buy and the cost to win.



COUNTERTOP EQUIPMENT

Countertop equipment encompasses the smaller pieces of equipment that can typically be used on a kitchen prep table or countertop. Not every commercial kitchen will require these items - some may not need any while others may need multiples of each pending on the menu.

Microwave Ovens

If you're looking for ways to save on prep time, consider a microwave. These machines can cook baked potatoes, steamed vegetables or reheat food. Depending on your requirements, you'll want to choose from low wattage, medium wattage and high wattage options.

- o Lower wattage is ideal for smaller operations that need to quickly warm up breakfast pastries.
- o Higher wattage options are handy in high-volume restaurants for steaming or reheating entrees.



Food Warmers

Food warmers range from soup kettles to countertop warmers to rethermalizers and are useful in both back of house and buffet applications.

- o **Soup kettles** make it easy for staff to swiftly serve the soup du jour or for patrons going through a buffet line.
- o **Countertop warmers** allow you to showcase multiple items in a buffet display or hold prepared foods in the back of house while chefs move to work on other dishes. Warmers work best when keeping food warm for short periods of time.
- o **Rethermalizers** help save on prep time for large events or catered affairs by allowing you to make food ahead of time and keep warm for a couple of hours.

Food Processors and Slicers

There are a wide variety of tools your culinary team can use to prep ingredients, with each type specialized for the food you're chopping. Consider your menu and the ingredients being used when choosing which processor or slicer is right for your kitchen.

- o **Processors, Choppers and Graters** are helpful for making fine or course minced veggies and herbs. Add different attachments to dice, shred, grate and julienne.
- o **Food Slicers** quickly chop large volumes of fruits and veggies so they are ready to go during the rush times. Many slicers can be used with multiple types of produce; however, some are made specifically for onions, potatoes or tomatoes.
- o **Meat Grinders** are used for making your own ground beef or sausages in house. With different attachment sizes you can make ground proteins course or fine depending on their usage.

COUNTERTOP EQUIPMENT

Mixers

This countertop tool can vary in type from stand mixers for batters to shake mixers for cool sweet treats.

- o **Stand mixers** are best for lighter-use applications. If you need a larger capacity mixer, consider a **planetary** mixer instead.
- o Blend shakes and malts to the perfect consistency with **malt and shake mixers**. If you're also offering moothies, think about using a separate **blender**.



Pasta Machines and Attachments

Make noodles in-house with a pasta machine to ensure even thickness. Keep your menu and the type of pastas you'll be serving in mind - different sized attachments are needed for each style of pasta.



Heat Lamps

There are two types of heat lamps - lamps that come with a stand and heat strips.

- o The stand lamps are best in buffet applications like carving stations. They give off little heat, but still keep food warm and are easily portable.
- o Heat strips are the better choice for more permanent buffet displays and keeping food in the back of house hot before it goes out to customers.



COUNTER OVENS & TOASTERS

Counter ovens and toasters include the tools needed for grilling, toasting and baking. Depending on your menu, you could need multiple convection ovens or a wall of toasters.

Convection Ovens

If you're short on time or space, consider a convection oven. It can reduce cooking time while also cooking foods at a lower temperature than a standard oven, saving time for your staff and keeping the kitchen cooler.

Use it to warm, roast, reheat or bake items. These ovens are available in gas and electric options, so ensure you know which one can be used in your space before making a purchase.



Toasters

When choosing a toaster, take into account where it will be used, how much will it toast and what will it be toasting. If you have a breakfast buffet, a pop-up toaster is the best choice. If you have specialty sandwiches or pastries or will be toasting a large amount of items, a conveyor toaster may be the better option.



COUNTER OVENS & TOASTERS

Griddles and Waffle Makers

Whether cooking up flap jacks or flipping a juicy angus-beef burger, you'll want to have the right griddle in your kitchen space.

Griddles can be gas, electric or induction. Induction griddles are newer to market and can decrease cook times. Electric options heat slower than gas griddles, but depending on your area, gas may be cheaper to use or vice versa. You'll also want to check which type is compatible in your space.



Panini Grills

Grill meats, sandwiches, veggies and quesadillas with a countertop Panini press. If you run a smaller deli or café, a medium-duty grill will suit your needs. However, if you are operating a high-volume sandwich shop or your menu calls for more grilled items, a heavy duty grill will work best.

Be sure to consider the material the grill plates are made of – aluminum, cast iron or non-stick. Each has their pros and cons so know which you value more – easy clean up or constant heat.



COOKING EQUIPMENT

Large **cooking equipment** is undoubtedly going to take a large portion of your budget. Before purchasing equipment, have an expert come out to take kitchen measurements and answer any questions you may have.

Broilers

Charbroilers or broilers come in multiple sizes, can be used indoors or outdoors depending on the type and are ideal for cooking up mouthwatering proteins. When choosing a broiler for your commercial kitchen, you'll want to think about the following:

- o Gas or electric power
- o Radiant or lava rock
 - Radiant charbroilers can be easier to clean, but won't create the same smoky-ness made by lava rock charbroilers.
- o Grate material and styles - Cast iron grates are only used on indoor broilers.
- o Back and side splashes make for easier cleanup.
- o Grease or water pans



Ranges

Range tops can be configured into any format you need. Determine which meals and what items you'll be serving in order to know how many burners you'll need. Also, be sure to know if you need an open gas burner, electric burners or griddle tops and how much space is required for a hood.



COOKING EQUIPMENT

Fryers

Fryers are available in various shapes and sizes. What you'll be cooking up will help narrow down the right fryer. As with any piece of equipment, check to see if a gas or electric fryer is more compatible with your space.

- o **Tube Fryers** can be more time consuming to clean than other types, but they can handle a wide range of heavy frying including fried chicken, onion blossoms, fried fish, French fries, cheese sticks, hot wings and poppers.
- o **Open Pot Fryers** are versatile and is a good choice for basic frying of items like fish, French fries, hash browns and hot wings. These are easier to clean than tube fryers.
- o **Flat Bottom Fryers** are best for small volumes of specialty foods like donuts, funnel cakes, tortilla chips, taco shells and tempura. This type of fryer can be difficult to clean.



Steamers

Steaming food is a healthy way to rapidly cook food without drying it out. They can come as kettles, portioned steamers or countertop boilerless steamers. Pressure steamers are ideal for steaming large quantities of hearty food where a boilerless steamers are better for smaller quantities.

- o **Kettles** are better for steaming large portions at once. They can stand on their own and won't take up counter space.
- o **Portioned Steamers** are best for smaller batches of vegetables and rice.
- o **Countertop Boilerless Steamers** are good in low-volume operations and have low maintenance. They do have longer cook times.



Tilting Skillets

Tilting skillets are best in high-volume kitchens as they quickly produce large quantities of soups, pastas, braised meats, eggs and more.

See all of the benefits of adding a tilting skillet to your equipment line up with our [blog](#).



COOKING EQUIPMENT

Ovens

There are multiple types of commercial kitchen ovens. Pending on the type of baking you'll do that will depend on the type of oven will best serve you.

- o **Combi Ovens**
Offer three types of cooking methods - pressure-less steam, convected heat or both. In addition to being able to steam veggies or cook meats, you can set the temperature on low and use it in place of a proofer, holding cabinet or slow cooker.
- o **Pizza Ovens**
Think about the type of pizza you'll be serving as well as how much space and volume you'll be selling before choosing the right pizza oven. Pizza Marketplace has detailed articles on each type of pizza oven and what it is capable of.
- o **Bakery Ovens**
Best for foodservice operations making baked goods on a daily basis.
- o **Conveyor Ovens**
Perfect for hi-volume establishments that need to quickly cook, bake or roast pizzas or sandwiches.
- o **Rapid Cook Ovens**
These ovens are ideal for cooking items on demand. Keep your guests happy by delivering meals fast without skimping on quality.



Vacuum Pak and Thermal Circulators

Vacuum packaging machines and thermal circulators help greatly reduce the amount of food waste and spoilage, saving your bottom line. Some models are manual while others are automatic. The automatic versions eliminate guesswork and the manual versions allow you to control the packaging depending on the product.



CARE & INSTALLATION

Proper care and installation of your equipment play key roles in extending their service life. Our [Foodservice Equipment Maintenance Guide](#) has tips on keeping everything in working order from fryers to ranges to refrigerators.

If you ever have an issue with a piece of equipment or questions about cleaning and maintenance, it is best to reach out to the manufacturer directly so they can provide correct information for your specific situation.

Good care of your equipment begins at installation. When receiving an equipment delivery, make sure you have the right piece that fits and is in working order before accepting. Our [checklist](#) has a quick overview of what to look for with

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