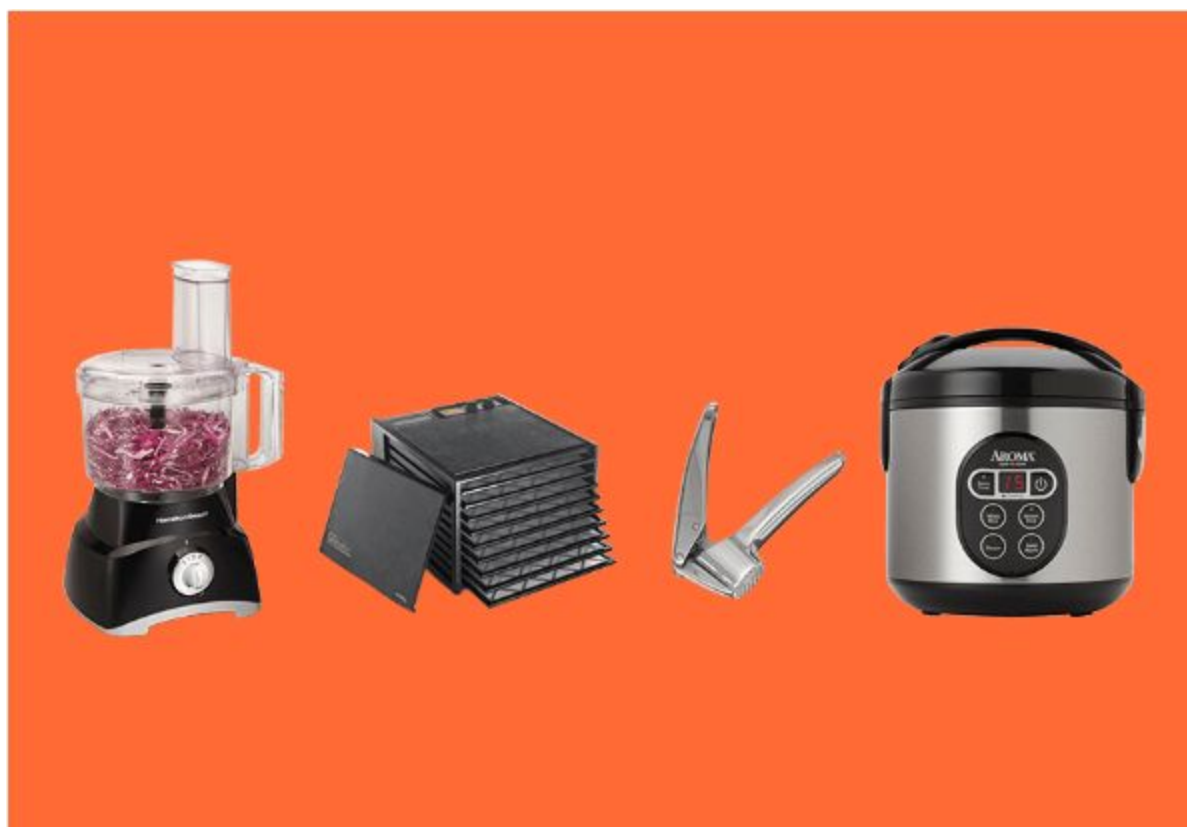


SELF

9 Of The Best Kitchen Gadgets For Weight Loss And Healthy Eating

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Hamilton Beach, Excalibur, Pro Culinary, Aroma via Amazon; Graphic by Valerie Fischel

So here's the thing about cooking at home: It's a process. A gratifying process, yes, but a process nonetheless. To do it, you need to stock your **pantry**, **fridge**, and **freezer** with all the right ingredients, and fill your kitchen up with a bunch of handy appliances.

If you're thinking, *that sounds like a lot work and I'd rather just order delivery*, there are a couple reasons you should consider switching to the home-cooked life. For one, once you get the hang of cooking, it can be pretty darn fun (at least in my opinion). But that's not all—many registered dietitians agree the best way to guarantee that your meals aren't packed with too much salt and **sugar** or a bunch of mystery ingredients is to make them yourself. In a nutshell, cooking your own food can help you form healthier eating habits, which can also promote weight loss.

To cook at home, you'll first want to gather the basics—pots, pans, things you probably already have. From there, you may want to look into these nine registered dietitian-recommend healthy-food tools.



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1. **A chef's knife**

"Anyone who says they don't like to cook has probably just been using bad knives. **A great chef's knife** makes prepping vegetables so easy and enjoyable. And home-cooked meals can be so much healthier than take-out or frozen options because you have full control of the salt and fat content."

—**Ilana Muhlstein**, R.D.

2. A food processor

"I use both a large 11-cup food processor and a smaller 7-cup food processor. I especially like the food processor for making creamy and smooth hummus, for quickly whipping together **energy bites with grains and dates**, and for instantly grating vegetables that I'll add to soups, sauces, and more. I also have a 1-cup food processor that is perfect for small, quick jobs like chopping nuts for a recipe or a yogurt topping!"

—Molly Morgan, R.D., C.D.N., C.S.S.D., owner of **Creative Nutrition Solutions**



Excalibur via Amazon

3. A dehydrator

"I use a dehydrator at least a couple of times a week for dehydrating fruits in the summer time (prunes, peaches, nectarines, pears, apricots, etc.), dehydrating soaked nuts and seeds, making crackers, wraps, raw pizza crust, cookies, granola and other treats. And this machine is super simple to use. I have the **9-tray Excaliber**—which I believe is the best dehydrator on the market—and I also have **Teflex sheets** for each tray. I would not buy the 5-tray version because as sometimes it's not enough."

—**Brenda Davis**, R.D.

4. A cast-iron skillet

"My most beloved appliance is my favorite cast-iron skillet. This pan is such a workhorse in my kitchen, and it allows me to create so many different things in a short amount of time. A well-seasoned cast-iron skillet has the same properties as non-stick pans, meaning you may not need to cook with as much oil or fat. It also retains heat, so the cooking time is reduced. And finally, there's just something special about the flavor imparted from cast-iron. This pan has replaced or reduced my need for other appliances: I no longer have to use a toaster, and reheating leftovers doesn't diminish the quality as is often the case when reheating in a microwave."

—Cara Harbstreet, M.S., R.D., L.D., of [Street Smart Nutrition](#)



Aroma via Amazon

5. A rice cooker

"Many people associate rice cookers with Asian food, but it's also a fool-proof veggie casserole maker. I'll often mix together quinoa or exotic rice blends

with fresh or frozen chopped vegetables, cubed tofu or another veggie protein, canned pineapple or dried raisins, nuts, a dash of oil to keep it from burning, and filtered water with some bouillon for flavor. I select the brown rice setting and walk away with confidence. Within about 30 minutes, the cooker beeps to let me know the casserole is ready and voilà—I have a nutrient-rich delicious meal."

—Denise Julia Garbinski, M.B.A., R.D.N.

6. A blender

"A powerful **blender** is the one piece of kitchen equipment that I couldn't live without. It's the perfect appliance for puréeing cannellini beans into a lower-calorie 'Alfredo' sauce, and there's no better way to purée smoothies, soups, and hummus. Sometimes I'll even use my blender for mixing dry ingredients, such as a spice rub."

—Jackie Newgent, R.D., culinary nutritionist and author of *The All-Natural Diabetes Cookbook*



Pro Culinary via Amazon

7. A garlic press

"Using a garlic press makes it so much easier to cook with fresh garlic. Rather than having to peel and finely chop—which can leave your hands with a lingering potent smell—you simply place a whole clove of garlic into the appliance and press firmly until the fresh and fragrant garlic comes out ready to use on the other side. Fresh garlic is perfect for a homemade pesto sauce with extra-virgin olive oil, basil, and pine nuts, sautéed with farm fresh spinach and lemon juice. It also complements any roasted vegetable and I love to add it to asparagus spears along with a sprinkle of sea salt and a pinch of smoked paprika."

—Lisa Mikus, RD, CNSC, [Laura Cipullo Whole Nutrition Services](#)

8. A toaster oven

"Now that I have a toaster oven, I can't go back to a regular toaster. I use it every single day. I make all sorts of simple, healthy meals and snacks in it—from whole wheat toast with peanut butter in the morning, to open-faced 'tartine-style' sandwiches in the afternoon. Sometimes I use it like a toaster...sometimes like an oven. "

—Caroline Kaufman, R.D.



Spiralizer via Amazon

9. A spiralizer

"A spiralizer gives **veggies a noodle-like shape and texture** which makes them more fun to eat! Veggie-noodles can be added to salads, or used as a lower-carb substitute for pasta. If I am making pasta, I will sometimes do half veggie noodles, half whole grain pasta to sneak a few extra veggies in without completing cutting carbs."

—Edwina Clark, M.S., R.D., C.S.S.D., and head of nutrition and wellness at **Yummly**

Quotes have been edited for clarity.