

The 5 Pots and Pans You Really Need, Plus 1 Ingenious Tool

These hardworking pieces will get you through almost every meal you'll ever make.

By Lynn Andriani



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To Get a Perfect Sear and Brownd Bits: The Frying Pan

Sure, you can pan-fry vegetables, fish and meat in a nonstick pan and have an easier time doing the dishes, but if you want caramelization—also known as the process that makes a piece of salmon a little crusty on the outside yet tender on the inside instead of cooked through but decidedly soft—a frypan (aka skillet) is a must. The surface also gives you those tasty browned bits that make for deeply flavored gravies and sauces. And its sloping sides simplify stirring, turning and flipping ingredients, whether you're making pork chops or pancakes.

Size: 10-inch

Make sure to...choose a frying pan made of a metal that conducts heat efficiently, such as anodized aluminum, cast iron, lined copper or stainless steel-wrapped aluminum.

But don't...cook with it using the highest heat. Keep the flame between low and medium-high; otherwise, you risk burning food and making cleanup a real chore (if you do find the pan has black spots you can't remove with dish soap, try [Bar Keepers Friend](#)).

