

# 15 products under \$40 that totally changed my life

Michael Desjardin, Reviewed.com Published 3:27 p.m. ET July 27, 2017 | Updated 5:01 p.m. ET July 27, 2017



15 products under \$40 that totally changed my life (Photo: Reviewed.com)

— Our editors review and recommend products to help you buy the stuff you need. If you make a purchase by clicking one of our links, we may earn a small share of the revenue. However, our picks and opinions are independent from USA TODAY's newsroom and any business incentives.

Lets face it: Getting through the day can be tough sometimes. Chores pile up, meals get ruined, and seemingly everything is expensive.

Discovering a product that dramatically improves your day-to-day life is an immensely satisfying feeling. These are a bunch of affordable products that have made my existence a whole lot easier. They're the sort of products that make you want to shake your friends by the shoulders and excitedly yell at them about.

So please, allow me to excitedly yell at you about some stuff that'll change your life for the better.

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## 1. Aluminum covers for gas stovetops



Aluminum stovetop burner covers (Photo: Gygy's Cart / Amazon)

Keeping your stovetop burners free of stains and food particles is one of the most Sisyphean tasks in the kitchen, so I was kind of blown away when I saw these disposable aluminum burner "bibs" in my friend's kitchen recently.

They're designed to fit the burners of just about any gas-powered stovetop (particularly the garden-variety stovetops you might find in an apartment), and 40 of them will only set you back about ten bucks. Plus, if your apartment's stovetop burners are already a little grody, these bibs will go a long way in making things look a bit more tidy.

Aluminum gas stovetop covers (40-count) - [\\$9.99 via Amazon](#)

## 2. Salux nylon bath cloth



Salux Bath Scrubber (Photo: Salux / Amazon)

You know that poofy mesh ball you use in the shower to clean your body? It's absolutely disgusting. It's basically a ball of dead skin and bacteria that spends all of its time hanging out in the warmest, wettest place in your home, making it a breeding ground for all sorts of nasty stuff. Don't believe me? [Ask a dermatologist.](#)

These Japanese nylon bath cloths are long enough to scrub your back, can be hung up to dry on a towel rack, and won't fall apart in a washing machine. They've helped me with breakouts, dry skin, and preventing razor burn. Simply put, I will never bathe with a disgusting loofah or shower puff ever again. Trust me: Grab three for \$12 and never look back.

Salux nylon bath cloths (3-pack) - [\\$11.79 via Amazon](#)

## 3. Tongue cleaners



Tongue Cleaner (Photo: Orabrush / Amazon)

Speaking of things that most people don't realize are disgusting—let's talk about your tongue. I wrote about the magic of tongue-cleaners in my list of [5 life-changing products for under \\$10](#), but here's the bottom line: Your tongue is a lot grosser than you think it is, and having a gross tongue is great way to develop bad breath. Yuck.

These tongue cleaners by Orabrush are the best I've tried. They're more effective than brushing your tongue with a toothbrush and four of them will only set you back about \$14.

Orabrush tongue cleaners (4-pack) - [\\$14.24 via Amazon](#)

## 4. Bar Keeper's Friend



Bar Keeper's Friend (Photo: Bar Keepers Friend / Amazon)

This stuff's a miracle. Got some old cookware covered in gunk? Dust some Bar Keeper's Friend and on there and bring your pans back to life. Countertops looking a little punished? Bar Keeper's Friend's got your back. It specializes in stainless steel and has its PhD in filthy bathtubs.

Honestly, it's a little creepy how effective Bar Keeper's Friend is when it comes to cleaning surfaces—the Amazon user reviews read more like testimonials from people who've just seen a new color. You, too, could see the light for just \$11.

Bar Keeper's Friend (2-pack) - [\\$11 via Amazon](#)

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## 5. Butter bell



Butter Bell (Photo: L. Tremain / Amazon)

You've probably heard of these things, but you also probably don't have one. And frankly, that's upsetting, because everyone should experience the joy of having spreadable, room-temperature butter at the ready at all times.

There's a bit of a learning curve here: You have to change the water every few days and keep it out of extreme heat so the butter doesn't drop into the bell's reservoir. If you can maintain a butter bell lifestyle, however, the joy is eternal. The cost is about \$25 and they're available in, well, every color there is, apparently.

Butter bell - [\\$24.95 via Amazon](#)

## 7. The best cutting board ever



Epicurean Cutting Board (Photo: Epicurean / Amazon)

I bought an Epicurean cutting board and loved it so much I wrote an embarrassing love letter to it shortly thereafter. You can go [read the salacious details](#) yourself, but here's what you need to know: They're durable, versatile, dishwasher safe, and won't ruin your knives. They look great in any kitchen, too. OK—I'll shut up about the Epicurean cutting board now. I promise.

Epicurean cutting board - [\\$23.50 to \\$37.95 via Amazon](#)

## 6. A transistor radio



Transistor Radio (Photo: Sony / Amazon)

Not much to say about this one. I bought mine so I could listen to Red Sox games on my porch with a beer in my hand (the way baseball was meant to be listened to), but then I started moving up and down the AM dial, discovering all sorts of interesting programming. Turns out the terrestrial airwaves are alive and well! My pick is this quintessential-looking Sony—it's got a huge antenna, sounds great, and the volume is much louder than you'd think.

Sony AM/FM transistor radio - [\\$27.89 via Amazon](#)

## 8. Mineral oil



Mineral Oil (Photo: Swani / Amazon)

Another thing I love about Epicurean cutting boards (sorry) is that they can take a relatively long beating before you need to treat them with something like mineral oil. In the meantime, I use mineral oil to store my razor blades, which unmistakably extends the life of your razors. Seriously—it's the best kept secret in shaving.

Just fill a container with enough mineral oil to submerge the blade, and your skin (and wallet) will thank you. You can even do it in some kind of decorative mason jar to make it look all rustic and hip.

Yes, I know the label says "laxative." Yes, mineral oil is technically a laxative. No, I can't speak to its effectiveness in this regard.

Mineral oil - [\\$7.99 via Amazon](#)

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## 9. Ghee butter



Ghee Butter (Photo: 4th & Heart / Amazon)

Where do I even start? Ghee has transformed my understanding of delicious butters. It's a form of clarified butter, so it's lactose free, making it perfect for people with lactose sensitivity. Since the smoke point of ghee tends to be much higher than regular butter, you can use it when searing meat at super-high temperatures without the taste getting bitter.

Buy a jar of the most appealing flavor (Himalayan salt, truffle, garlic) for less than \$10 and store it in your cupboard—no need to refrigerate!

4th & Heart ghee butter - [\\$9.49 via Amazon](#)

## 11. Secret Aardvark Sauce



Secret Aardvark Sauce (Photo: Secret Aardvark Trading Co. / Amazon)

I bet you weren't expecting to see the words "Secret Aardvark Sauce" on this list, huh? If you're big into hot sauces (particularly versatile, entry-level hot sauces like Sriracha) you owe it to yourself to try this stuff. This Tex-Mex-meets-Caribbean hybrid is incredibly popular in Oregon, and it's easy to see why: It's a tangy, sweet, and addictive as hell.

To quote Amazon user Ambitrek: "I need to order this by the gallon. [S]up."

\*Sup, Ambitrek. Thanks for the recommendation.

Secret Aardvark Sauce - [\\$9.16 via Amazon](#)

## 10. Automatic soap dispenser for the kitchen



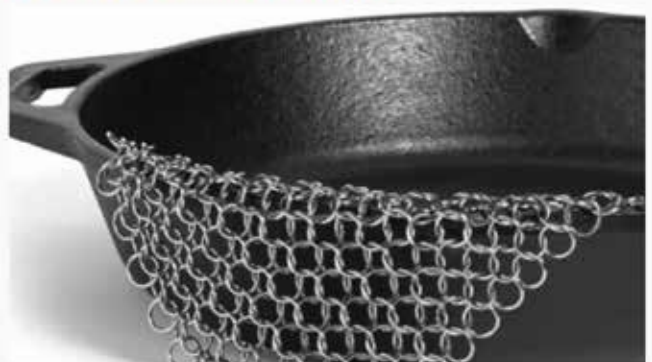
Automatic Soap Dispenser (Photo: Simplehuman / Amazon)

When I first got this soap dispenser as a gift, I was like, "A soap dispenser! Neat!" I wasn't disappointed or anything. I just wasn't really ready to fall in love with a thing that dispenses soap. But this has been living in my kitchen for over a year and I cannot imagine a time before it lived there. Cleaning slimy chicken hands is no longer an ordeal, and cleanliness in the kitchen is imperative.

Fill this \$35 dispenser with your favorite soap—any soap will do—and commence with the automatic soap dispensing. It's hands-free heaven.

Simplehuman automatic soap dispenser - [\\$34.99 via Amazon](#)

## 12. Cast iron chainmail scrubber



Cast Iron Chainmail Cleaner (Photo: Amagabeli / Amazon)

When I compiled a previous list of [products under \\$40 that've changed my life](#), I gushed about small, plastic cast iron pan scrapers that had transformed my cast iron experience. I'm happy to report that I've found something even better—a \$14 chunk of stainless steel chainmail. It's got a 5-star average with over 950 reviews for a reason.

And if you don't already have a cast iron pan, check out our picks for [the best cast iron pans of 2017](#). This is a kitchen essential.

Amagabeli chainmail scrubber for cast iron - [\\$13.99 via Amazon](#)

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## 13. Chemex pour-over coffee maker



Chemex Coffee Maker (Photo: Getty Images / "Thorntechich ThanaSuijar")

My favorite way to brew coffee is with a Chemex. It's somewhat of a meditative process: arrange the filter, get the water to the appropriate temperature, and monitor the water level as you pour over the grounds. Admittedly, it's not for everyone, which is why I recommend starting with this \$37, 3-cup, entry-level model.

If you consider yourself a coffee connoisseur, trust me: Chemex makes a damn fine cup of coffee. It's also one of the most aesthetically pleasing objects in my kitchen.

Chemex pour-over coffee maker (3-cup) - [\\$36.95 via Amazon](#)

## 14. Grease splatter guard



Grease Splatter Guard (Photo: BergKoch / Amazon)

If you're sensing a "dirty kitchen" theme, it's only because I've struggled to keep my kitchen clean for years, constantly searching for ways to keep the room free from basic cooking nuisances:

A splatter guard for your cookware drastically cuts down on tiny droplets of oily grease, which can quickly turn a stovetop into a slippery, smelly mess. This is the best-reviewed splatter guard on Amazon—it's only about \$17 and comes with a lifetime warranty.

BergKoch grease splatter guard - [\\$16.90 via Amazon](#)

## 15. Salad spinner



Salad Spinner (Photo: Getty Images / "pashapirel")

I hesitated to include a basic salad spinner on this list because I assumed pretty much everyone had one. It wasn't until I polled my friends and co-workers and discovered that, somewhat insanely, most of them did not own a salad spinner.

Folks, the only thing worse than dirty salad greens are still-wet greens that refuse to be coated in delicious dressing. This \$30 number from OXO is your best bet.

OXO salad spinner - [\\$29.95 via Amazon](#)

Prices are accurate at the time this article was published, but may change over time.