

GADGETS

Continued from Page 28



5. MANDOLINE

It's hard to get perfectly thin slices for most of us home cooks, even with a good knife. But with a mandoline, you can get even slices of all sorts of vegetables and other ingredients. One example is the OXO Good Grips Hand-Held version, which comes with settings for three different thin-nesses, and a handle so you can slice safely and quickly into a bowl or over a plate.

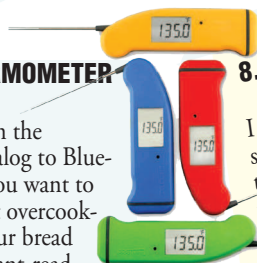
6. PEPPERMILL

Nothing is more important in the kitchen than salt and pepper, and freshly ground pepper is much better than pre-ground. The Peppermate Traditional Pepper Mill is sleek and contemporary looking, made of ceramic with a side crank. It has a removable, clear bottom cup under the grinder to catch the pepper, and an adjustable grinding size, from very fine (for most things) to very coarse (for things like steak au poivre). For a more classic look, Peugeot makes high-quality mills.



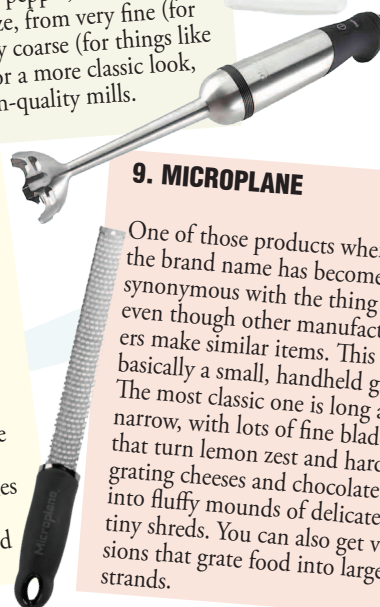
7. INSTANT-READ THERMOMETER

There are many versions on the market, from digital to analog to Bluetooth to infrared. When you want to make sure that you are not overcooking a roast beef, or that your bread is cooked through, an instant-read thermometer is indispensable. (You'll justify the cost quickly when you consider how much you spent on that holiday filet!) In the most user-friendly digital arena, Thermopen instant thermometers are fast and precise with a wide temperature range.



8. IMMERSION BLENDER

I love my blender and food processor, but if you've ever tried to transfer a pot of hot, chunky soup to a blender then you understand why an immersion blender is such an asset. Instead of pouring, just place the immersion blender right into the pot. You can even stick the wand into a can of whole tomatoes and puree them right there. There are loads of good ones on the market, from companies like Breville, All-Clad, Braun and Philips.



9. MICROPLANE

One of those products where the brand name has become synonymous with the thing itself, even though other manufacturers make similar items. This is basically a small, handheld grater. The most classic one is long and narrow, with lots of fine blades that turn lemon zest and hard grating cheeses and chocolate into fluffy mounds of delicate tiny shreds. You can also get versions that grate food into larger strands.



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