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TOP 5 CANNING GEAR ESSENTIALS

AUGUST 18, 2011



This post comes to us courtesy of cookbook author and food writer [Karen Solomon](#).

I'm not big on kitchen equipment that doesn't do much. My cupboards are a Darwinian universe of mandatory performance — work hard or get the heck out. [My books](#) are full of hacks to keep you from buying infrequent items like cheese and tofu presses and the like. Don't expect me to buy you — or, more importantly, store you — if I can make you myself out of something I already own.

But when it comes to canning jams, jellies, pickles and the lot, there is a handful of well-loved, much-needed gear that I will clutch forever in my tight little cooking fists. Please, never, ever take away from me any of the following:



My giant, oval Le Creuset.

Not only is this my most beloved roasting and braising pot, but it's great for jellies that splatter and jams that foam. It retains heat well. And no matter how sticky the burn, I can always seem to scrape it clean.

Canning jars!

OK, so I have a problem when it comes to jars. I can't stop collecting them! Let's just say that domestic war has been waged on my jar collecting habits. I've been attending CA (Canner's Anonymous, of course) to wean myself off of every nicely shaped olive jar and wide-mouthed peanut butter jar that crosses my path (great for storage, but not actually seal-able). However, when it comes to buying jars, such as these stunning [Weck](#) little numbers, I cannot get a grip.

For everyday use I also stock a pantryful of the basics — [Ball](#) and [Kerr](#).

My scale.

My scale is a necessity for weighing fruit, vegetables, flour for baking, etc. It used to be that home scales took up a ton of room and cost a heap. Neither of these is true any longer. I bought my OXO, good for up to five pounds, for about \$35 and it demands very little real estate. I also use it for [figuring out postage](#) on packages, and for satisfying my general curiosity on how much kittens weigh.

Adorable and often frightening dishtowels.

A girl's gotta cook with class...

Canning tongs.

I own [these](#), but I was shopping this past weekend and I think I would rather own [these](#). For years I removed scalding hot glass jars of boiling food from steaming, merciless vats of boiling water using nothing but regular cooking tongs, a sieve, and, apparently, a guardian angel over my shoulder. Amazingly, I have lived to tell the tale. Owning and using canning tongs is one of my forays into adult decision making.

So, just wondering: What's your favorite piece of canning cooking gear?

About the author: [Karen Solomon](#) is the author of [Can It](#), [Bottle It](#), [Smoke It](#) and [Jam It, Pickle It, Cure It](#) (Ten Speed Press). She has been a well-published food writer for over a decade. Her edible musings on the restaurant scene, sustainable food programs, culinary trends, food history, and recipe development have appeared in *Vegetarian Times*, *Fine Cooking*, *Prevention*, *Yoga Journal*, *Organic Style*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Magazine*, the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, *Zagat Survey: San Francisco Bay Area Restaurants*, and elsewhere.

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MARGOTGN

August 19, 2011 - 8:16 pm

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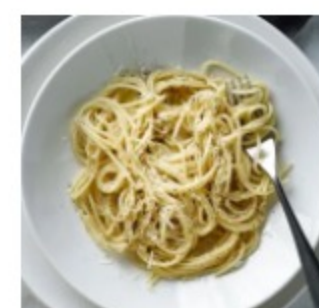
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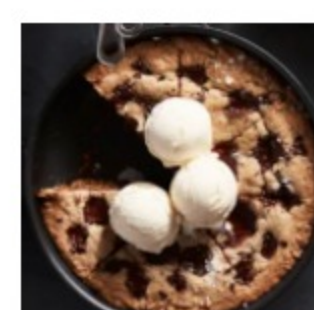
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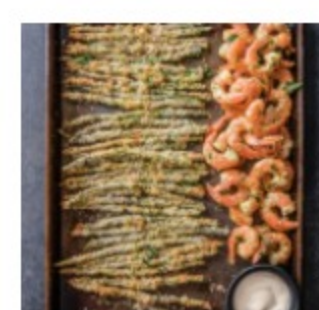
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