

TYPES OF COOKWARE

Features, Pros, and Cons

CLAD STAINLESS. STEEL

- Durable, non-reactive, lasts decades.
- Versatile, best all-around material for sets.
- Aluminum/copper core heats evenly if thick enough.
- Not hard to wash! Soak burnt-in food.
- Good brands can be expensive.



BARE CAST IRON

- Must be seasoned or will rust.
- Best for skillets.
- Will last decades or centuries.
- Heavy, with excellent heat retention.
- Wide price range, with not a lot of upside to buying more expensive brands.

ENAMELED CAST IRON

- No seasoning required.
- Best for Dutch ovens/liquid cooking methods.
- Will last decades or centuries.
- Heavy, with excellent heat retention.
- Wide price range, with high end brands having more durable enamel.



CARBON STEEL

- Seasoning required.
- Best for skillets and woks.
- Will last decades or centuries.
- Heat retention good, but not as good as CI.
- Most brands are affordable, with not much upside to buying more expensive brands.

PTFE NONSTICK

- Aluminum or clad stainless w/nonstick coating.
- Best for skillets: don't buy sets.
- Will last 1-5 years.
- "Forever chemicals" bad for health and environment (this includes "PFOA-free").
- Best to buy cheap brands (but not too cheap).
- "Hybrid" cookware is PTFE cookware.



CERAMIC NONSTICK

- Aluminum or clad stainless w/nonstick coating.
- Best for skillets: don't buy sets.
- Will last 1-5 years.
- Contains nanoparticles that may not be safe.
- Best to buy cheap brands (but not too cheap).

COPPER

- Lined with tin or stainless steel for safety.
- Thick copper heats evenly and is very responsive.
- Some is "tri-ply" w/aluminum; actual copper content can vary widely.
- Real copper cookware is very expensive.
- The choice of many pro chefs.



BARE ALUMINUM

- Affordable.
- Heats evenly.
- Found mostly in restaurant kitchens.
- May give acidic foods a metallic taste.
- May not be safe to use (assoc. with Alzheimer's).

100% STONEWARE

- Heats slowly and unevenly.
- Heavy and breakable.
- Some brands very expensive.
- Used mostly by cooks who prioritize "safe" cookware over even heating.

