

Clear Your Counters: 8 Small Appliances You Probably Don't Need

By Brette Sember | November 5, 2015 | 9:00am

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If your countertops are cluttered, it's time to rethink your small appliances. These tend to accumulate and then gather dust. Streamline your life by considering what you really do and don't need. We all have a few gadgets that might seem unnecessary to others (lefse griddle, anyone?), so pick what you can't bear to part with and then imagine how spacious your kitchen will be without the other stuff.

Blender

Unless you're making daiquiris for your friends every weekend or whipping up smoothies for breakfast every morning, you probably don't need a blender taking up counter space. If you have a food processor it can do much of the work a blender can, including making smoothies or pureeing soup. A hand-held immersion blender is also a great space-saving replacement. It stores inside a drawer or cabinet and can be used to make drinks in a pitcher or to puree right in a soup pot.

But let's say you do have a good blender, one with a motor strong enough to make hummus or nut butters. In that case, hang on to the blender and skip the food processor.

Bread Machine

Assuming you are not regularly making all the bread your family is eating, a bread machine is a kitchen behemoth you can likely do without. There is no magic that a bread machine performs that you can't do yourself in a mixing bowl, especially with the widespread popularity of no-knead bread techniques. And when you bake it yourself in a loaf pan it comes out in a normal shape without that weird hole in the middle.

Popcorn Popper

Air-popped popcorn is a healthy snack, but you can accomplish exactly the same thing in a paper bag in the microwave while saving yourself a lot of space (and without the temptation to melt butter in the tray on top). Don't have a microwave? You can [pop popcorn on the stove in a stockpot](#).

Panini Press

Panini presses are the socially correct way for making sandwiches now, but they're big and clunky. You can achieve the same results with a frying pan and a sandwich press (a flat piece of metal with a handle you heat and then set on top of the sandwich while it cooks). The sandwich press does double duty on the grill for burgers and steaks. In a pinch you can always make a sandwich in a waffle iron since it's just a panini press with grooves.

Egg Cooker

Maybe you bought this because you can't trust yourself to leave a pan of eggs on the stove, but making hard-boiled or soft-boiled eggs isn't the rocket science. Buy yourself some kitchen space by putting your eggs in a pan of water and boiling it, then turning it down to simmer and setting the timer on your phone to 15 minutes.

Baby Food Maker

Return the shower gift and puree baby food in the food processor or mini food processor. You get exactly the same results and have an appliance you can use for other things.

Steamer

Have a steamer *or* a rice cooker, but not both. Steamers can cook rice with a rice insert. If doesn't have one, set a glass or microwave safe bowl in it to cook the rice (1 part rice to 1.5 parts water). Many rice cookers come with a steamer bowl. If yours doesn't, a small metal colander that fits inside will do the trick. Ditch either appliance completely with a steamer insert for your saucepan and cooking your rice in a pot (2 cups of rice to 3 cups water. Cover and cook until bubbles form around the lid. Turn off the heat and allow to sit 25 minutes. Do not remove the lid until the time is up).

Electric Can Opener

It's unlikely you're opening more than a couple of cans a week. Accomplish the same thing with a small manual opener that fits in a drawer (and which will work when there's a power outage and you might need canned food). Bonus: it's a calorie burner.

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