Choosing and Using Your Electric Skillet

When used to its fullest advantage, the electric fry pan is one of the most useful and versatile cooking appliances you can own. You can fry, bake, warm baby food or rolls, or even pop popcorn in an electric fry pan.

If you have an electric fry pan with a thermostatic control, a lid with a vent, and a rack its uses multiply. Portability and cook-and-serve styling extends its usefulness to dining area, porch or patio, and weekend cabin life.

Today's consumer has a wide range of choices available in small appliances. Whether to buy additional cooking appliances is an important decision for the money-conscious, energy-conscious, and labor-conscious consumer.

Too often, many of us have appliances that we don't use to full capacity because they aren't familiar to us or because they are stored in inconvenient, hard-to-reach places.

Choosing, and then using, an electric fry pan to its fullest capacity can mean substantial savings in money as well as in storage space. If you use an electric fry pan to capacity, you may not have to buy a number of other small appliances that could cost you around $200 and require as much as a 12-inch-deep storage shelf more than 8 feet long. In contrast, you can expect to pay about $26 for the average electric fry pan. It weighs about 3 pounds and requires a 15-inch by 15-inch by 7-inch storage space.

The following table illustrates the savings that could be made if one electric fry pan were used to capacity instead of buying, using, storing, and moving the twelve different appliance examples. You may be able to think of other appliances that an electric skillet could replace. This illustration is not meant to say that other, specialized appliances don't have a place. If they are used often, perhaps they are good buys for the individuals who own and use them. The purpose in including this information is to alert consumers to alternative uses of many appliances. Appliances owned and those that are being considered for purchase should be evaluated in terms of usefulness. Consider appliances in terms of energy and labor saving factors and the space it takes to store them, as shown in the table.

Your electric skillet is a real homemakers' helper.

- Store it in a convenient place.
- Challenge yourself to use it and take advantage of its many features.
Design and Features

For special needs, there are electric fry pans as small as 6 1/2 inches in diameter, and as large as 12 inches. The most popular are in the 8 to 10-inch range. The larger ones are most popular and provide more cooking surface than many persons need. A 10-inch pan is adequate for one-quarter area or one 10-inch round pan.

Fry pan

Fry pans today may be made of aluminum, stainless steel, or some combination of stainless steel and aluminum, copper, or carbon steel. Price differences are often great, making it difficult for a shopper to make an informed selection. Since most fry pans are of the type applied to the exterior and cooking surfaces, varied fats from plain aluminum or stainless steel to porcelain to enamel to a variety of decorator finishes. Polystyrene tins are less expensive but also less durable than porcelain enamels. Choose a fry pan that you like, that is sturdy, and that will last and you won’t be burned by the discomfort of frequent use.

The cooking surface may be of metallic finish, or have a non-stick surface, or have a combination of both. The metallic surface is easy to clean, but the non-stick surface is more practical for small, delicate items. The non-stick surface is often hard to clean, and the metallic surface is more practical for the occasional use or gentle cleaning.

Special features

Many fry pans are available on some models—copper interiors, built-in warming trays beneath the surface, even a low heat zone beneath the cooking area. If you have the money, look for a non-stick surface on the other side of the cooking area. This side will be covered with a crock pot rack that can be used as a rack for other cooking purposes. This feature will be useful for the other side of the cooking area.

Additional features generally add cost. Before shopping for a fry pan and any other cooking appliance, make sure that you are familiar with all of the features that you will use enough to justify the additional cost.

Points to be made when buying

It is important that you keep some features in mind when buying a fry pan or any other cooking appliance. There are many features that you may want to include in your shopping list. In this way, you can select the one that fits your particular needs and style.

1. Size in relation to needs. Single to as much as 3 feet across for large groups, time and place, at which time the heat control is switched on. This is the best choice for you. However, a larger one with the greatest amount of heat may be necessary for a fast-cooking pan. The right size pan makes it easy to store and transport.

2. Price range. Most trips are sold in the $25 to $75 range. This is the most economical range for cooking of all kinds. When selecting a trip, consider the price range, the number of pieces needed, the ease of cleaning, the amount of heat control needed, and the size of the cooking area.

3. Low temperature settings. Some trips are available that will allow you to control the heat from a low temperature setting of 25 to 50 degrees. This is the most convenient range for cooking of all kinds. When selecting a trip, consider the price range, the number of pieces needed, the ease of cleaning, the amount of heat control needed, and the size of the cooking area.

4. Special features. Some trips come with special attachments such as a low heat zone beneath the cooking area. This feature will be useful for the other side of the cooking area.

5. Non-stick surface. Many trips are available that have a non-stick surface. This feature will be useful for the other side of the cooking area.

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Bake cake

To bake a cake, you will need a cake pan. A cake pan is made in different sizes and shapes. The cake pan should have a removable bottom to make it easy to remove the cake. Some cake pans are made with a removable bottom, some with a removable lid, and some with a removable corn. Some pans are made with a removable bottom and a removable lid. In this way, you can select the one that fits your particular needs and style.

To bake a cake, you will need the following equipment: a cake pan, a skillet, a skillet with a removable bottom, a skillet with a removable lid, a skillet with a removable corn, a skillet with a removable bottom and a removable lid, a skillet with a removable corn and a removable lid, and a skillet with a removable corn and a removable lid. In this way, you can select the one that fits your particular needs and style.

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Cooking vegetables
Cook squash, corn on cob, asparagus, and other bulky vegetables in your fry pan. Add about 1/2-inch of water in bottom of fry pan. Bring to a boil at 300°, then cover, reduce temperature to simmering point. Simmer until vegetables are tender. Season.

Heating baby foods
Place foods in heat resistant custard cups or use opened self containers. Put 2 cups water in fry pan. Arrange cups or jars on rack in fry pan. Cover, close vent, set dial at 300° until water boils; then turn down to simmering point. Heat until food is warm as desired.

To keep foods warm
Set dial in warm temperature range. If foods are to be kept waiting a long time, use a rack in bottom of fry pan and set foods on this. Open vent on cover for foods which tend to become soggy.

To heat rolls, coffee cake, etc.
Place 4 layers of aluminum foil in bottom of fry pan; if packaged in foil, this is not necessary. Cover, preheat to 300°. Place rolls directly on foil or foil packaged ones directly on bottom. Heat with vent open 10 to 15 minutes. Rolls may also be placed on rack, with 2 tablespoons water in bottom of fry pan, cover, preheat to 420°. Heat rolls about 10 minutes.

Heating frozen tray dinners
When heating only one tray at a time, place tray on a rack after preheating covered fry pan to 420°. Cover, preheat to 420°, with vent closed, pour 1/4 cup water on foil. Place trays on top of each other, staggering so that they crisscross. Cover, bake 10 minutes. Uncover, switch top tray to bottom, alternating so that each tray is left on bottom for 10 minutes.

Chafing dish
Use the fry pan as a chafing dish, taking it directly to the table to keep foods hot or to prepare foods. For buffet, card, or picnic table, it is the easy way to serve. The following recipes suggest methods of creative uses for your fry pan as a portable oven, pasta cooker, and in direct baking.

Quick and easy supper surprise
Illustrates use as a pasta cooker. Spaghetti cooks right in this skillet casserole—saves the step of boiling and draining.
1 lb. ground beef
2 cups fine dry noodles or spaghetti
1 cup chopped onion
1 small can chopped ripe olives
1/2 lb. sliced American cheese
2 1/2 cups stewing tomatoes
Brown meat slightly in skillet—drain. Stir in onion and celery and season with salt and pepper to taste. Arrange remaining ingredients in layers as recipe lists. Rinse tomato can with 1/3 cup water and pour over skillet dish. Cover, Bring to boiling. Reduce temperature and simmer 30 minutes. Occasionally, remove cover and press pasta into liquid. Serves 6.

Cheese cake
As a portable oven, try your fry pan for this.
Temp: 380°—preheated
Time: about 35 minutes
Makes: about 16 servings
Crust: Combine 1-1/3 cups graham cracker crumbs, 1/2 cup melted butter, 1/3 cup granulated sugar, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon in small bowl. Mix thoroughly. Press mixture into 10" pie pan.
Filling:
2 eggs
1-1/2 cups sugar
1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla
1-1/2 cups cream cheese, very soft
Combine eggs, sugar, vanilla, and lemon rind in small mixer bowl. Beat on medium speed for 1 minute. Add cream cheese, a small amount at a time while beating each time until blended. After all has been added, beat 1/2 minute longer. Pour into crust, spreading evenly. Bake in preheated fry pan on a rack at 380° for 35 minutes, or until set, vent closed. Spread with:
Topping:
1 to 2 cups commercial sour cream, as desired
2 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
Beat with a fork until blended and spread over cheese mixture. Cover, bake 5 minutes longer. Remove from skillet and cool. Cut into desired servings. Delicious topped with sweetened strawberries or a can of cherry pie filling.
**Date honey bars**

Yummy bar cookies baked in the skillet.

Temp: 280°
Time: about 30 minutes
Makes: about 4 dozen

1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
1/3 cup soft shortening
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup pitted dates, cut
3 eggs, unbeaten
1 cup nuts, chopped
1 cup strained honey

Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Place eggs, honey, shortening, and vanilla in small mixer bowl. Beat on high speed 2 minutes. Add flour mixture and beat on low speed 1 minute. Add dates and nuts, beat 1/2 minute longer. Meanwhile, preheat fry pan. Grease well with unsalted shortening. Add batter, spreading to cover bottom evenly. Cover, close vent, bake until firm on top. Uncover, turn dial to off. Cool in fry pan, cut in squares. Remove with pancake turner. May be sprinkled with confectioner’s sugar or frosted with thin lemon frosting.

**Upside down cake**

Baked in the skillet.

Temp: 255°
Time: 35 minutes
Makes: about 16 servings

**Batter:** Yellow cake mix or favorite plain cake recipe. Mix as directed on the package or in the recipe. Fruit syrup or juice drained from fruit can be used as liquid in the mix. Then prepare the bottom mixture.

**Bottom mixture:**

1/4 cup butter or margarine
1 cup light brown sugar, packed
2 1/2 cups fruit or 9 slices pineapple, drained
Use any desired fruit, such as canned sliced pineapple, canned peach halves, canned apricots, or pears. Set dial at 220°, add butter. When melted, add brown sugar, spread evenly over surface of pan. Arrange drained fruit over the sugar mixture. Nuts or other garnishes might be added, if desired. Spread batter evenly over fruit. Set dial at 255°. Bake 35 minutes or until dry on top with the lid on and the vent open. Loosen edges with spatula and invert onto a rack or tray. Let stand a few minutes, then lift fry pan. Serve warm or cold, garnished with whipped cream or served with ice cream.

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