

Cool Tools

I've been playing with a bunch of new kitchen tools and wanted to share them with you. PROS– they do exactly what I need them to accomplish. CONS– they really only do one trick each, so it's annoying to try and store them all in an organized way. But seriously– I love kitchen gadgets! And if it's something that makes what I do easier?! That's a total win.

I've been particularly interested lately in cool tools that my kids can use, too. I worry that they are so spoiled by home-cooking that I have totally ruined them to someday become functional adults and helpful spouses. Maybe that's a little extreme, but I want them to appreciate and enjoy what I cook for them and also be able to cook for themselves.

So here is a short list and some links for my favorite new purchases:

✘ [✘Pro-Apple Peeler](#). This gadget suctions to your countertop and easily swirls around pretty much any size apple. I've even used it for redskin potatoes! My kids can set it up and use it, no problem. They are funny– one kid likes apple skins and then other likes peeled apples– this machine deserves applause in our house.

✘ [✘The Hands-Free Baggie-Rack](#) is pure genius. I don't know about you, but I do most of my cooking by myself. When I want to bag up ingredients, especially soups, it is so hard! I like to freeze broth-based soups in plastic bags because I can fill the bag and lay it flat in the freezer; when they are frozen solid, I can stand them up like books on a bookshelf. I also use this when I make hard-boiled eggs. I like to peel all the eggs at once and then store them in a bag instead of a plastic container.

✘ ✘ I use my [Immersion Hand Blender](#) at least a couple times a week. We use it for smoothies, creamy soups, mashed potatoes, pancakes and just about anything else that needs to be smooth. It is so much less cleanup than using a full blender or stand-up mixer. I want less fuss and more doing with pretty much anything I am using. Don't you?!

✘ ✘ I've posted a couple recipes recently that suggest using a [rack, or trivet](#), in the crock pot to keep the meat elevated from the liquid. I used in my [Crock Pot Pork and Prunes](#) and I also use it when I [roast a whole chicken](#)!

Sometimes I like to read cookbooks for inspiration or to learn a new approach about putting foods together, so I have two recommendations for you. They are COMPLETE OPPOSITES, but both worthy reads.

✘ ✘ I have been reading [Thug Kitchen: Eat Like You Give a F*ck](#) and literally cracking up laughing out loud. It is crass and mouthy and absolutely real life. The entire cookbook is meat-free (not my typical style) because they want to motivate cleaner eating and while you may be asking "hold the f*ck up, where the meat?" they assume that "the last thing anybody needs in another book coming out telling you how to cook meat. Clearly you got that sh*t on lock". This book is entertainment and amazing recipes and here's the kicker— it teaches you HOW to cook, not just giving instructions and ingredients. You'll find yourself not only reading it for fun, but learning that "eating real, healthy food" doesn't need to be "a big f*cking deal".

✘ ✘ I've also been learning how to [Eat Happy](#). This book is

the recipe for a healthy life. It doesn't have the glossy pictures that you might anticipate in a cookbook, but has great explanations and education about what we should eat and why. It does have a great section of 50+ recipes with new ideas like buckwheat crepes (yum!) and bison meatloaf. The lessons in this book are helpful— I feel empowered to move away from any processed foods and pick foods based on their benefits, not just their taste. As the author states, “unfortunately for your health, the actions that are best for corporate profitability are all too often the worst for your health”. I want to focus on keeping me, as in MY BODY, in business— it's the best investment I can make.

So there you go— a few of my favorite things that I've added to my kitchen. I'm learning more and more everyday about what works, what doesn't, and what helps me in the kitchen. Eating well and feeding others should be about food that tastes good, is good for you, and doesn't destroy your kitchen in the process of making it! Get a few cool tools and get organized. Let's go!