

Buying Guide



Food preparation equipment might take up a relatively small amount of space in a kitchen, but the capabilities in terms of helping caterers make light work of many of tasks has a big impact, not only on efficiency but on the final dishes produced too.

There is a wide range of equipment available, and it depends on the style of food on offer and the type and format of raw ingredients bought in that will help determine what an operation needs. Many caterers prefer to prepare their own fresh fruit and vegetables to be used in recipes/dishes than buy in ready prepared, so they need the equipment to reflect this.

This equipment has a key role to play in helping to create nutritious, appealing meals and drinks and includes sophisticated juicers, veg prep machines, food processors, blenders – table top and stick, mixers and slicers, down to the more basic pieces. A lot of equipment can become multifunctional with the addition of optional extras - for example, mixers can be used across many applications – from mixing dough for pizza bases or bread to blending vegetables, simply by changing attachments.

Technological advancements have allowed for new functions to be developed, such as in mixers for example, auto timers, auto bowl lifts and safety interlocks, improving performance even further, enabling reduced production times and consistent results.

Advantages

- By investing in the right prep equipment, caterers have the flexibility and adaptability to handle fluctuations in demand, vary menus, be more creative and enhance presentation.
- Easily and inexpensively keep up with new food trends and create added value, higher margin offerings – for example, smoothies or slice own cooked meats.
- Although these pieces will still need hands on operation or supervision, they do make light work of laborious tasks, saving staff valuable time and effort and allowing them to get on with other aspects of food preparation – increasing efficiency.

Buying Tips

By choosing the right model and maintaining it, you can expect it to last around 2-5 years.

- **Which equipment?** - Be clear on the intended use, work out what pieces will save the most time and effort based upon current and future menus – the ingredients used and style of cooking and therefore be the most cost effective choice. Look at the volume of throughput too and variations/peaks in service times, the size and space in the kitchen and the skill level of staff. Ensure the equipment is large and powerful enough to undertake the daily tasks – it's better to have a more powerful machine running at three quarters capacity than an underpowered one running flat out. Look for versatility - multiple tasks from one machine.
- **Build quality and reliability** - Regardless of size or duty, sturdy manufacture is a 'must' - choose a well-known commercial brand - anything else won't perform or last. These brands usually offer the most innovative and technologically advanced equipment with intelligent and energy saving features. Consider also the availability of spare parts and after sales service, plus what length of warranty is available.
- **Operational features** - Ease of cleaning - removable parts aid hygiene safety. Ease of use, as varying skill levels will be using the equipment. Safety aspects of operation – guards fitted, temperature controls. Flexibility for adaptable service – look at attachments available for multi-tasking. Variable speeds for greater control and versatility.

Key to icons

	Light Duty Designed for commercial use in a less busy environment
	Medium Duty Strongly constructed to perform in a busy situation
	Heavy Duty High standard of build to provide good service under heavy use
	Extra Heavy Duty High powered, fast throughput with the highest standard of build
	13 Amp Plug and go!
	Hardwired Hard wiring required
	GAS
	Stainless Steel Construction
	Warranty