

Countertop Buying Guide



Countertop Charbroilers



Pros

- Brings the flavor and taste of backyard grilling into food service production
- Utilizes over-fire broiling technology and intense heat to sear, brown and char food
- Removable grates for easy cleaning and access to heating elements
- Creates visually appealing grill marks on all food products
- Maintains constant cooking temperature and faster recovery times

Cons

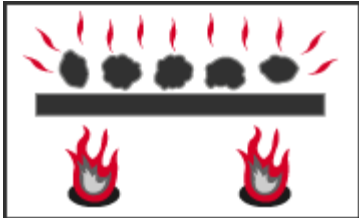
- Units stay lit during entire service resulting in high energy use
- Low efficiency due to open burner construction
- Must pre-heat cooking grid in order to cook food product
- Smoke can get out of control without adequate ventilation

Radiant Heat and Lava Rocks



Radiant Heat

- ⊕ Heat is deflected throughout surface
- ⊕ Hot spots are well defined
- ⊕ Consistency in cooking
- ⊕ Slanted heat sheaths limit flare-ups
- ⊕ Slanted sheaths are easier to clean



Lava Rocks

- ⊕ Ceramic briquettes simulate charcoal cooking
- ⊕ Uses a gas heating element
- ⊕ Fat drips onto the briquettes creating flavorful smoke
- ⊕ Briquettes must be changed twice a year adding extra cost
- ⊕ Increased flare-ups due to carbon and grease build up on briquettes

Griddles and Cheesemelters



Griddles

Griddles consist of a flat metal plate made of steel, cast iron or aluminum upon which the food is cooked.

Pros

- Different foods can cook simultaneously on griddle surface
- Ideal for cooking a variety of foods from eggs to hamburgers
- Griddles with a non-stick surface or that are appropriately seasoned limit the amount of food that sticks to the surface.
- Open cooking area allows for easy cleanup

Cons

- Griddle must pre-heat before use
- Must be properly seasoned



Cheesemelters

Vary in size and performance, though they are typically less powerful than other under-fire broilers. Countertop models are designed for smaller food items that need a quick blast of heat to prepare them for service.

Pros

- Uses under-fire heating technology to quickly re-heat and brown food items
- Melts cheese and creates au gratin dishes
- Lower energy output provides alternative to salamanders

Cons

- Light weight cooking grid does not allow for heavy-duty food production
- Lacks the complexity and is less powerful than a salamander broiler

Hot Plates, Panini Grills and Toasters



Hot Plates

When extra burners are needed, but buying an entire range doesn't make sense, these units provide affordable extra burner capabilities.

Benefits

- Adds extra burners without the cost and bulk of a full range
- Allows for cooking additional food items and sauces à la minute
- BTU ratings similar to full range burners provide high heat cooking potential



Panini Grills

These small electric grills are incredibly versatile and can enhance your profits considerably. Traditionally used to grill sandwiches by pressing a two-sided heating element onto the sandwich; these units can be used to make steak, hamburgers, chicken breasts, vegetables and many other products. When purchasing, be sure to judge your purchase based on cooking surface style, control style, size of grill and look for quick heat up and recovery times.

Benefits

- Versatility to cook a variety of food items
- No additional ventilation needed



Toasters

Toasters are one of the most used items in many restaurants and hotels. Buying a commercial model, even if you run a small restaurant or café, is imperative for both heavy-duty durability and increased production levels. There are two different types of toasters: **Pop-Up** and **Conveyor**.

Pop Up

- Suitable for smaller restaurant that still want the great taste toasted bread
- Less expensive than conveyor toasters
- Not as versatile as conveyer style toasters

Conveyor

- Perfect for high occupancy restaurants and hotels
- Larger openings allow for toasting of muffins, bagels and bread
- Look for adjustable belt speed and adjustable heat setting
- Provides high output of toast with short preheat times

Microwave Ovens



Pros

- Quickly and safely cooks, reheats and defrosts food products for service
- Programmable controls allow for easy, one touch start-up
- Saves energy
- Heavy duty construction for long lasting use
- Produces extremely healthy dishes by using no additional cooking oil or fat

Cons

- No caramelization or browning of food products
- Can leave some foods very dry and flavorless

This indispensable piece of kitchen equipment is used to cook, reheat or defrost food products. Buying a commercial grade machine is paramount for a number of reasons:

- Higher wattage than domestic ovens
- Ensures faster cooking and safer defrosting
- Sophisticated heat distribution system evenly re-heats food
- Stainless steel body built to withstand daily heavy duty use
- Most insurance policies do not cover accidents caused by residential microwave ovens

Induction Ranges



Pros

- Instantaneous maximum heat capacity negates pre-heating time
- No wasted energy, burner only ignites when pan is placed on burner
- Perfect for delicate sauces and chocolates
- Easy to clean and no possibility of burns

Cons

- Initial expense of unit is much higher than conventional hot plates
- Ferrous metal pans, such as stainless steel, must be used when cooking

Induction ranges provide instantaneous heat production by utilizing magnetic charges to create heat. While more expensive than traditional gas or electrical hot plates, these units provide the safety and technology that is only available from induction cooktops.

The portable cooktops are very popular with catering businesses, as they are much cheaper and safer to operate than comparable butane or electric units.