



# Alton Sustainable Eating

Healthy Food, Healthy Planet



## Elevate your plant-based cooking game: Must have kitchen tools & tips.

By Dee Panes, ACAN's consultant on Sustainable Eating

Having the right kitchen tools can significantly ease the cooking process, particularly when preparing plant-based meals. Firstly, these tools can streamline food preparation, making tasks such as chopping, blending, and cooking much quicker. For example, a high-quality chef's knife and cutting board can expedite the chopping of vegetables and fruits, while a powerful blender can effortlessly puree ingredients for sauces, soups, and smoothies.

Additionally, specialized tools such as spiralizers, food processors, and immersion blenders can help create a variety of plant-based dishes, from courgetti spaghetti to creamy sauces and dips. Investing in durable cookware, such as non-stick pans and sturdy baking sheets, ensures even cooking and prevents ingredients from sticking, reducing the need for excess oils or fats. Furthermore, having essential kitchen gadgets like a vegetable peeler, salad spinner, and citrus juicer can simplify meal preparation and encourage the consumption of fresh produce.

By equipping the kitchen with the right tools from the outset, transitioning to a plant-based diet can make cooking enjoyable, efficient, and successful.

To make cooking easier, motivating and fun, we have assigned various types of equipment into the following categories. Are you ready? Here goes:

### BASIC KITCHEN TOOLS

1. Chef's Knife and Cutting Board: Essential for chopping vegetables, fruits, and herbs.
2. Saucepan and frying pan: Versatile cookware for sautéing, simmering, and frying.
3. Mixing Bowls: For combining ingredients and preparing salads or dressings.
4. Measuring Cups and Spoons: Precise measurements for baking and cooking.
5. Blender or Food Processor: Essential for blending soups, sauces, and smoothies.
6. Baking Sheet: Useful for roasting vegetables and baking.
7. Vegetable Peeler: Makes peeling fruits and vegetables quick and easy.
8. Colander or Strainer: For rinsing grains, legumes, and draining pasta.

### MAKE LIFE EASIER KITCHEN TOOLS

1. Immersion Blender: Convenient for blending soups and sauces directly in the pot.
2. Garlic Press: Makes mincing garlic a breeze.
3. Vegetable Spiralizer: Perfect for creating vegetable noodles from courgettes, carrots, etc.
4. Salad Spinner: Helps wash and dry greens quickly and efficiently.
5. Citrus Juicer: Extracts juice from citrus fruits for dressings, marinades, and beverages.
6. Silicone Spatula: Ideal for scraping bowls and pans and stirring ingredients.
7. Digital Kitchen Scale: Ensures accurate measurements for baking and cooking.

## NICE TO HAVE KITCHEN TOOLS

1. Cast Iron Frying pan: Provides even heating and versatility for cooking.
2. Nut Milk Bag: Perfect for making homemade nut milks and straining sauces.
3. Mandolin Slicer: Produces uniform slices of vegetables and fruits.
4. Herb Mill or Mincer: Effortlessly chops fresh herbs for seasoning dishes.
5. Pressure Cooker or Instant Pot: Speeds up cooking times for grains, legumes, and stews.
6. Coffee Grinder: Can be used to grind spices, nuts, and seeds.
7. Kitchen Scissors: Handy for cutting herbs, trimming vegetables, and opening packages.
9. Steamer basket: Makes steaming vegetables quick and easy, preserving their nutrients and vibrant colours. A vegetable steamer basket can also be used to steam tofu, dumplings, and other plant-based delights.

NOTE: There are other pieces of kitchen equipment that are very nice to have such as air fryers, dehydrators, sprouting kits, high powered blenders, electric pressure cookers, mixers etc. etc.

## HERE ARE 8 MAGICAL TIPS TO HELP YOU COOK PLANT-BASED FOOD AT HOME, UTILISING THE LISTED EQUIPMENT AND OTHER TECHNIQUES:

**Embrace Variety:** Experiment with a wide range of fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds to create diverse and satisfying plant-based meals. Try incorporating seasonal produce to keep things fresh and exciting.

**Plan Ahead:** Take some time to meal plan and prep ingredients in advance. Wash, chop, and portion out vegetables, grains, and legumes to streamline the cooking process during busy weekdays.

**Master Flavour:** Elevate your dishes with herbs, spices, citrus zest, and umami-rich ingredients like nutritional yeast, miso paste, and tamari. Don't be afraid to get creative with seasoning to enhance the taste of your plant-based meals.



**Utilise Texture:** Create contrast in your dishes by incorporating a variety of textures. Roast vegetables for crunch, add creamy sauces made from cashews or coconut milk, and sprinkle toasted nuts or seeds for added depth and flavour.

**Explore Plant-Based Proteins:** Incorporate a variety of plant-based protein sources such as tofu, tempeh, seitan, legumes, and quinoa into your meals to ensure you're getting enough protein and staying satisfied.

**Repurpose Leftovers:** Get creative with leftovers by transforming them into new dishes. Leftover grains can be turned into grain bowls or fried rice, while roasted vegetables can be blended into soups or purees.

**Mindful Cooking:** Practice mindfulness while cooking by focusing on the colours, aromas, and textures of your ingredients. Engage all your senses to create a deeper connection with your food and appreciate the process of cooking.

**Share and Enjoy:** Invite friends and family to join you in the kitchen and share the joy of cooking plant-based meals together. Host potluck dinners or cooking parties to exchange recipes and inspire each other on your plant-based journey.

 By incorporating these magical tips into your cooking routine and embracing the versatility of plant-based ingredients, you'll discover a whole new world  of delicious and nourishing meals that will enchant your taste buds and nourish your body and soul. 