

CATEGORY TO STUDY: TOASTERS/TOASTER OVENS

Overview

In the U.S., an estimated 75 million people eat toast every day, making the toaster one of the most important small appliances in today's kitchen (Quick Servant Company, 2016). Food manufacturers have made toasters even more important to consumers by creating foods specifically designed for the toaster, such as pop-tarts and waffles. The toaster oven is not only an alternative to the regular toaster, but has also become popular as an energy-efficient way to cook and reheat small volumes of food that you would typically prepare in a traditional oven. Both types of toasters have seen many improvements over the years, with many options now available to consumers.

A Brief History of Toasters

People have been toasting bread for centuries.

Before the toaster was invented, toasting was done over a fire or flame using various tools, such as a long metal fork or in a metal frame (Snodgrass, 2004). "Toasting" started to change in 1893 when Alan MacMasters from Edinburgh, Scotland, invented the first electric toaster. General Electric came out with their first electric toaster in 1909 (Kyalo, 2021). Toaster ovens came onto the scene at this time as well, with Westinghouse Electric Company's in 1910 (Cooper, 2019). However, these early toasters only toasted bread on one side. That changed in 1913 when the Copeman Electric Stove Company introduced the "toaster that turns toast" that toasted both sides of the bread (Hagley, 2017).

In 1919, the automatic "pop-up" feature was added to an electric toaster designed for restaurants, and by 1926 the product was redesigned for home use and sold it under the brand name *Toastmaster*. This new kitchen gadget introduced features we commonly see in toasters today – toasting both sides of the bread simultaneously, a timer for the heating element, and automatic ejecting the toast when finished (Hagley, 2017). It wasn't cheap, selling for \$13.50, which doesn't sound like much but that is the equivalent of more than \$150 today (FoodReference.com, n.d.).

By the 1960s, prices were low enough that the toaster was commonly found on the kitchen countertop of most U.S. households (Kyalo, 2021). Since then, toasters and toaster ovens have continued to evolve with new features resulting in many choices for consumers today.

Selection Features

(Consumer Reports, 2021; Cook's Illustrated, 2019; McManus, 2021)

There are several factors to examine when deciding which toaster to purchase.

Type:

1. Two or four-slice toasters: This appliance is the least expensive of the two and is a good choice if you only need to toast some type of bread or toaster pastry in the morning. Two-slice models are purchased more than four-sliced models.
2. Toaster ovens: Toaster ovens provide more versatility as they can broil, bake, roast, and reheat small quantities of food, in addition to making toast. This appliance is available as a countertop model and models that are mounted underneath a cabinet.

Design: Several options of exterior finishes are available (i.e., chrome, copper, brushed metal, and a variety of colors). Retro and contemporary designs are also options. Two-slice models may have two side-by-side openings or one long slot. Slot widths and depths vary with toasters, with the widest slots designed for bagels and thicker bread slices. Also, slots less than 5 inches deep are typically too shallow. Some models have windows to let you see your bread toasting.

Toaster ovens size vary widely and are important considerations relative to available counter space. The size of the food that will be prepared in the oven is also a consideration. For example, if you intend to heat frozen pizza in this appliance, the interior needs to be large enough to accommodate this food. Interior lights may be available on some models.

Controls: Choices include "shade" dials (i.e., how light or dark you want your toast), as well as the more precise numbered dials and electronic touchpads. The toast automatically pops up when ready for most toasters, but how high it pops up is different. This feature is important as it impacts how easy or hard it is to get the toast out of the slots. Some models don't have auto pop-up and instead have a chime or click to indicate the toast is ready.

Toaster ovens may have special settings for warming, reheating, broiling, and defrosting. Some models have a convection setting; these models have a fan that allows faster cooking at a lower temperature. An air-frying feature is also available with some models.

Performance: For even browning of bread, toasters have the advantage over toaster ovens. However, toaster ovens are used to cook a wider variety of foods – essentially, most foods you would cook in a traditional oven, but smaller quantities. All toasters/toaster ovens have an automatic shutoff feature, with some having a "countdown" feature.

The numbers of wires on the heating elements of toasters make a difference, with the best models having around 15 wires on each side of the toasting slots. Additionally, the heating element may be wires or quartz rods.

For toaster ovens, the adjustability of the racks is a consideration, especially if you plan to broil food.

Cleanup: Toasters have a crumb tray that is hinged or removable, which is the easier of the two to clean. Nonstick and porcelain interiors are easier to wipe down than other surfaces. Appliances with few vents and holes in the housing reduce cleanup as there are fewer places for grease and grime to collect.

SAMPLE CLASS TOASTERS:

#1



Breville
BOV900BSS the
Smart Oven Air
Fryer Pro,
Countertop
Convection Oven,
Brushed Stainless
Steel

Visit the Breville Store
★★★★★ 5,274
ratings

Brand: Breville

Color: Brushed Stainless Steel

Item Dimensions (LxWxH):
17.5 x 21.5 x 12.7 inches

Material: Stainless Steel

Price: \$399.95 & FREE Returns

About this item

- The Breville Smart Oven Air with Element iQ System is a versatile countertop oven allowing you to roast, air fry and dehydrate; Use super convection to reduce cooking time by up to 30% and choose from 13 cooking functions; Includes an interior oven light
- ELEMENT iQ SYSTEM: Using 6 independent quartz elements, smart algorithms steer power to where and when it's needed to create the ideal cooking environment; Sensing and digital PID temperature control eliminates cold spots for precise and even cooking
- AIR FRY & DEHYDRATE SETTINGS: Air fry French fries and other family favorites; Higher temperatures combined with super convection (maximized air flow) deliver crispy golden air fried foods; Dehydrate a wide range of food, up to 4 trays of goodness at once
- SUPER CONVECTION TECHNOLOGY: 2 speed convection fan (super & regular) offers greater cooking control; Super convection provides a greater volume of hot air to ensure fast and even heat distribution perfect for air frying, dehydration and roasting
- 13 COOKING FUNCTIONS: Super versatile countertop oven and air fryer with 13 functions to guide you to perfection: Toast, Bagel, Broil, Bake, Roast, Warm, Pizza, Proof, Air Fry, Reheat, Cookies, Slow Cook and Dehydrate
- EXTRA LARGE CAPACITY: Extra large 21.5 x 17.1 x 12.7 inch interior with capacity for 9 slices of bread, a 14 pound turkey, air frying French fries and slow cooking with a 5 qt Dutch oven; Large enough to fit most 9 x 13 inch pans and 12 cup muffin trays
- INTERIOR OVEN LIGHT: Integrated oven light automatically turns on at the end of the cooking cycle to help you see inside; It can be turned on at any time to see your progress; Replaceable componentry like your regular large oven
- LCD DISPLAY: LCD display to easily access the built in smart functionality and all cooking functions; The LCD also indicates when pre-heat has completed and automatically begins to count down on the cooking time for perfect results
- INCLUDED ACCESSORIES: 13 inch Pizza Pan; Two Oven Racks; 9 x13 inch Broil Rack and Enamel Roasting Pan; Mesh basket rack for dehydrating and air frying
- WARRANTY: 2 Year Limited Product Warranty; Power: 1800 Watts; Voltage: 110 to 120 Volts

#2



\$29⁹⁹

Oster 2 Slice, Bread, Bagel Toaster, Metallic Grey

Color: Metallic Gray

Brand Oster

Color Metallic Gray

Material Stainless Steel

Item 11.7 x 6.9 x 7.3

Dimensions inches

LxWxH

Item 3.9 Pounds

Weight

About this item

- **ADVANCED TOAST TECHNOLOGY:** Designed with Advanced Toast Technology and auto-adjusting bread guides for consistent, even toasting, every time
- **EXTRA-WIDE SLOTS:** Made with 2 extra-wide slots to easily accommodate a variety of bread types, from bagels to artisanal breads
- **7 SHADE SETTINGS:** Features 7 toast shade presets from light to dark, to make it easy to customize your toasted bread just the way you like it
- **CUSTOMIZABLE TOASTING TIMES:** Bagel, Frozen and Pastry settings automatically adjust toasting times, for perfectly toasted results
- **LIFT LEVER:** Integrated high-rise lever lifts toast out for easy retrieval

#3



Cuisinart CPT-435
Countdown 4-
Slice Brushed
Stainless Steel
Toaster

Brand Cuisinart

Color Brushed Stainless

Material Alloy Steel

Item 12.6 x 12.3 x 9

Dimensions inches

LxWxH

Item 7.1 Pounds

Weight

Price: \$79.95

About this item

- Stainless steel housing and blue backlit LCD countdown feature display
- Blue LED function buttons. Note: Kindly refer the user manual before usage of the product.
- 7 Shade settings as well as Bagel, Defrost and Reheat options
- Removable crumb tray
- Self-adjusting 1-1/2-Inch wide slots.
- Stainless Steel Housing

#4



Cuisinart TOB-135N Deluxe Convection Toaster Oven Broiler

Visit the Cuisinart Store
★★★★★ 1,009 ratings

Price: **\$174.89**

Brand	Cuisinart
Color	Silver
Item	18.5 x 15.35 x 9.84 inches
Dimensions LxWxH	
Item Weight	17.75 Pounds
Finish Type	Polished

About this item

- 1. Spacious 0.6 cubic-foot capacity Fits 6 slices of bread or a 12" pizza
- 2. Digital controls allow you to set the temperature in increments of 25 degrees with large blue backlit display; 9 functions
- 3. Convection fan cooks food faster and more evenly
- 4. Easy-clean nonstick interior
- 5. Clock and 2-hour timer; automatic shutoff
- 6. Included Components: Toaster Oven Unit

Scenario

Natalie and Brian have cooked meals with their parents and want to start making their own, especially breakfasts and lunches. Avocado toast for breakfast, grilled cheese for lunch, pizza for all three meals. Mom says to remember they have to clean as well as cook. Their current toaster is a basic two-slice model, but they need one that can do more than brown bread. The kids have been given a budget of up to \$200 to spend.

STANDARDS

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS	PRICE	TYPE: TOASTER OR TOASTER OVEN	SPECIAL SETTINGS	Can it bake a pizza?	Easy Cleaning
1. Breville Smart Oven Air Fryer Pro	\$399.95	Toaster Oven	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Roast, air fry, dehydrate, convection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	?
2. Oster 2 slice toaster	\$29.99	Toaster	☹️	☹️	?
3. Cuisinart Countdown 4 Slice Toaster	\$79.95	Toaster	☹️	☹️	?
4. Cuisinart Deluxe Convection Toaster Oven	\$174.89	Toaster Oven	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9 functions; convection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> medium-sized one	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Placement: 4-1-2-3

The Cuisinart Deluxe Convection Toaster Oven (#4) was ranked highest. Since it is a toaster oven, it can make all the foods that Natalie and Brian want to make, and it has a non-stick interior for easy cleaning. While the Breville (#1) also meets their cooking needs and has many cool features, it is over budget. The two toasters (#2 & #3) won't meet their needs as they can only make toast with these appliances. The Oster model has a slight edge because of the price, but neither model is suitable.

References

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