

# How a Blender Can Upgrade Your Home-Cooking Game — and the Best Brands for Your Goals

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L I V E S T R O N G . C O M



Besides making delicious smoothies, your food blender can whip up cold soups and puree ingredients.

Image Credit: Yummy pic/iStock/GettyImages

From berry-packed smoothies to spicy cold soups, there's no denying that a blender has rightfully earned its place on

any kitchen counter, as it can mix, puree and emulsify foods in minutes.

And yes, blenders can be extra helpful in whipping up frozen cocktails and delicious smoothie bowls. However, this kitchen appliance also has remarkable nutritional benefits to boot, making it a win-win for your tastebuds and your wallet.

In fact, research shows that blending food into a soup can help increase satiety post-meal, according to a May 2012 study published in *The Journal of Nutrition*.

Similarly, blended grapefruit juice had an advantage over grapefruit juice made in a juicer — the blended juice had significantly higher levels of beneficial phytonutrients compared to juiced grapefruit, a September 2012 study published in the *Journal of Food Science* found.

With this in mind, we tapped kitchen pros to break down all the ins and outs of this handy appliance, all the different ways you can use one and the best types for your needs and goals.

## **How Does a Blender Work and What Can You Use It For?**

A blender works by using a high-powered motor and blunt

spinning blade to help liquify food, chef and nutritionist [Serena Poon, CN](#), explains. This allows the gadget to successfully crush and blend frozen foods.

Whether it's a portable blender you can tuck in your work bag or a countertop appliance you can use again and again, chef and cookbook author, Dennis Prescott, says that blenders at their core are basically liquidizers, as they can mix, puree and emulsify foods with ease.

Make pureed baby foods

Whip up smoothies

Blend gazpacho and other cold (or hot) soups

Crush ice

Grind meat

Blend sauces and marinades

Chop veggies

## Tip

You can chop veggies in a blender so long as your appliance has a chopping setting, Frances Largeman-Roth, RDN and author of the upcoming book *Smoothies & Juices: Prevention Healing Kitchen*, says.

"Some blenders have a chop or pulse function, which processes the ingredients just enough to break them down into small pieces without fully blending them," Largeman-

Roth says. "If you're trying to chop veggies in a blender, you need to have a blender with a setting that accommodates that. Don't press the smoothie button thinking that you're going to get chopped veggies."

"As far as I am concerned, blenders are absolutely an essential kitchen appliance," Prescott says.

"Whether it's crushed ice, smoothies or pureed soup, this appliance makes the whole cooking process a lot easier."

## **Blender Recipes to Try**

9 Ridiculously Easy Recipes You Can Make in Your Blender

4 Cold Soup Recipes to Keep You Chill All Year Round

10 Irresistible and Nutrient-Dense Smoothie Recipes to Blend

## **What's the Difference Between a Blender and a Food Processor?**

On the surface, food processors and blenders appear so similar they're almost interchangeable, Prescott explains. However, in reality, both gadgets excel at different kitchen tasks such as liquidizing and chopping.

"Blenders have dull blades and are meant for liquid-based foods such as soups, purees and smoothies," he says. "On

the other hand, food processors have razor-sharp blades and are perfect for pulverizing onions and garlic, making creamy pesto and breaking down hard ingredients like nuts and seeds."

Largeman-Roth suggests that blender containers and attachments also differ from their food processor counterparts, as blender containers tend to be taller and contain a single blade.

"Blender containers are generally tall and shaped like a pitcher or a cylinder, and they usually have a single blade that rotates quickly to pulverize the ingredients inside the blender," she says.

"A food processor, on the other hand, usually has interchangeable blades and discs. Some slice, while others shred, grind and puree. Also, some food processors have attachments that knead dough and do other jobs. The bowl of a food processor is usually round."

## **Related Reading**

How to Use a Blender as a Juicer

So, can you use a food processor as a blender?

Not exactly. Food processors are meant for dryer foods, while blenders are more suitable for liquid-based foods with

higher water content.

"Although the functions of a blender and food processor can complement each other, they are not interchangeable," Poon says. "If you try to make a liquid-based recipe in a food processor, the liquid will likely spill out, making it a very messy endeavor."



Single-serve blenders are great for those who cook for one or two, as they get the job done without taking up much counter space.

Image Credit: 10'000 Hours/DigitalVision/GettyImages

## **How to Choose the Best Blender — and Best Brands to Buy**

If you're wondering what kind of blender will work best for

your kitchen, Poon suggests that there are a variety of different options that suit any budget.

### **Best for power and durability: Vitamix**

If you want a powerful and well-built investment blender that will last a while, she advises looking into brands such as Vitamix because they make durable and easy-to-clean machines.

"Vitamix is widely considered the best blender because it is powerful, well built, and easy to clean, and what I personally use daily," she says.

**Buy It:** Amazon; **Price:** \$349.99

### **Best for multi-purpose on a budget: Ninja**

If you're looking for a blender that won't take up too much cabinet space, Poon recommends grabbing the popular Ninja Mega Kitchen System, as it only has one base to store.

Ninja blender units are also durable and affordable, she adds, making them ideal for those who don't want to spend a fortune on appliances.

**Buy It:** Amazon; **Price:** \$199.99

### **Best for quick, single-serve recipes: NutriBullet**

If you're looking for blenders you can use on-the-go, Largeman-Roth recommends investing in single-serve blenders that can be used for post-gym smoothies or during your busy weekday.

"NutriBullet has great units that are lightweight and space-saving," she explains. "Plus, some of the models have to-go style containers, so you can set up your ingredients the night before, and then just blend and go in the morning."

**Buy It:** Amazon; **Price:** \$49.88