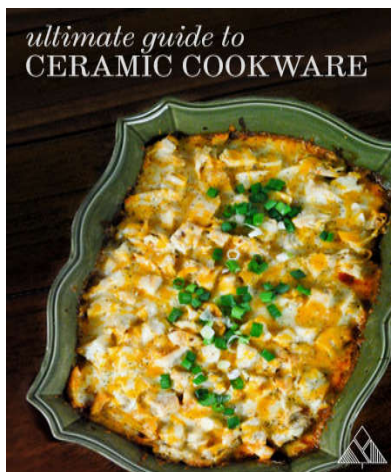


# Ceramic Cookware Tips & Tricks

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We know what to eat. We know which foods are healthy for our bodies and which aren't.

Not to say we always listen to that angel on our shoulder telling us to choose a salad over the Croquet Monsieur, but we have the knowledge and can make our own decisions based on it.

Even if we were to eat roasted veggies and lean meat for every meal, there are always concerns about the health of what we put in our bodies.

What are we cooking our food on/in? Are we using non-stick pots and pans? Have we even looked into ceramic cookware?

In college I had no idea non-stick pans were unhealthy to cook food in.

I loved cooking on them because I could fry an egg with minimal oil and run out the door to catch class. They make cooking/cleaning a breeze.

My roommate had a cast iron skillet – and cooking an egg on it was such a pain! My 5 minute routine quickly turned into a 30min detour.

As with everything in life, this shortcut has a consequence.

Although the subject is rarely talked about, results from studies on cooking in non-stick pots/pans are alarming and consequential. Don't fret, there are non-toxic alternatives out there!

Below is an easy guide to walk you through the safety, cleaning and purchasing process of healthier products to match your healthy lifestyle.

# Ultimate Guide to Ceramic Cookware

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Let me save you some time... I've spent hours researching and made some pretty bad purchases just to help put together this guide on ceramic cookware (ok minor exaggeration but at least I can help you!).

If you are looking for something specific in this article, please refer to our table of contents:

## ARTICLE CONTENTS

- 1 Ultimate Guide to Ceramic Cookware
  - 1.1 Why I Switched to Ceramic Cookware
  - 1.2 Is Ceramic Cookware Safe?
  - 1.3 What About Ceramic Coated Cookware?
  - 1.4 In My Opinion, the Best Ceramic Cookware & Stoneware
  - 1.5 My Top Ceramic Kitchen Tools
  - 1.6 Ceramic Skillet
  - 1.7 Ceramic Pots and Pans
  - 1.8 How to Clean Ceramic Cookware
  - 1.9 Additional cookware options
  - 1.10 Ceramic Cookware Infographic

## Why I Switched to Ceramic Cookware

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We all know nonstick pans have a coating on them (duh... this is why food doesn't stick to them).

And we can obviously piece together that this coating is made of chemicals.

The actual chemicals are “PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) and other perfluorinated compounds (PFCs), which are used to make grease-resistant food packaging and stain-resistant clothing as well. Even though there are many names, what you can take to the bank is that if it is non-stick it has some type of fluoride-impregnated coating that is providing the slipperiness” ([Dr. Mercola](#)).

The concern is heating nonstick pans. Unlike other chemicals, PFOAs & PFCs begin to breakdown and release toxins once they hit a temperature of 500 degrees.

Although this sounds extremely high, and a temperature you would never hit, you'd be surprised...

According to **The Good Housekeeping Institute**, this temperature can be reached within seconds. They stated that it takes only 2.5 minutes for 2 tablespoons of oil to hit a dangerous temperature, and 8.5 minutes for a hamburger to.

The scariest part is that the toxins being released infiltrate the food being cooked on the nonstick surface, and they release toxins into the air.

According to **Dr. Axe**, 98% of Americans have PFOA's in their bodies. And although all of these studies have been done, "70% of cookware bought in the United States is non-stick"(**Dr. Mercola**).

What do these chemicals do to our bodies?

According to **Dr. Oz**, "These chemicals can block the action of estrogen in our bodies (possibly damaging fertility), harm your lungs and have even been known to kill pet birds whose cages were kept in kitchens."

## Is Ceramic Cookware Safe?

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Over the years I've experimented with cooking on several nontoxic surfaces. There are quite a few options out there but after being fooled by nonstick for so long I had to do my research!

Is ceramic cookware safe? Are cast iron skillets safe?

After reading and using several options. I landed on ceramic cookware. It was the best option for me because:

1. It's surface is nontoxic and doesn't leach any chemicals when cooking in it
2. Easy to clean
3. Not too heavy
4. The cookware seems to be extremely goof-proof – no matter how many times I bang it on my stove or hit my spoon on the bottom when stirring, it doesn't seem to scratch or crack
5. It can be heated to extremely high temperatures and run under cold water! (**Dr. Axe**)

## What About Ceramic Coated Cookware?

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When purchasing ceramic cookware I always steer clear from ceramic coated cookware. Even though they are coated in ceramic, the base is typically made of aluminum.

According to Xtrema, a ceramic cookware company, “So far no company to date has published their laboratory testing results for chemical components or metal leaching on these new ceramic non-stick coatings. There is no documented proof that these new ceramic coatings are 100% durable, safe and non-toxic”

Why am I concerned that the base material of ceramic coated cookware is typically aluminum?

According to this [article](#): “Aluminum cookware is one of the most common cookware to use, but can be very toxic as this heavy metal is absorbed into all food cooked in it. The aluminum released into foods during cooking ends up in your body. Excess aluminum has been associated with estrogen-driven cancers and Alzheimer’s disease.”

All this is why I stay away from ceramic coated cookware and go with the best of the best ceramic cookware...

## In My Opinion, the Best Ceramic Cookware & Stoneware

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Although I haven’t been able to experiment with each and every brand’s products, I have read extensively and hope to someday try everything out! Below is a list of the best ceramic cookware options based on my research and experimentation, however if you have tried something different that you love, let me know in the comments below!

1. **Xtrema:** The handcrafted Xtrema products are said to be “healthiest for you and our planet. We also have and will continue to develop new and innovative ceramic products that will continue to be the finest, safest and most versatile cooking alternatives”. The ceramic glaze they use on their products is nontoxic and scratch proof! They are said to be dishwasher and microwave safe, however I always hand wash mine just to be in case. Although their cookware may be a little more expensive, the handcrafted quality and eco-friendly awareness in their products makes it worth it! Here are a few of my favorites from them:
  1. **10” 100% Ceramic Skillet with Cover and Silicone Pot Holder**
  2. **5.5 Qt. Versa 100% Ceramic Sauce Pot with Cover**
  3. **1.5 Qt Traditions 100% Ceramic Saucepan**
2. **Emile Henry:** This Company has been creating ceramic cookware since 1850! It is still owned and operated by the Henry family in Burgundy France. They differentiate themselves by using Burgundy clay, which they say is a “high resistance oven ceramic” and their products are “direct freezer-to-oven. They exhibit extraordinary thermal shock properties”. Emile Henry products are also said to be microwave and dishwasher safe. I primarily use these products for baking or anything going in the oven, I find they have the sizes/products I like to use!
  1. **Emile Henry Flame Burgundy Pizza Stone**

2. **Emile Henry Modern Classics Rouge Rectangular Baker**
  3. **Emile Henry Modern Classics Sugar Square Baker**
  4. **Emile Henry Bread Loaf Baker**
  5. **Emile Henry Modern Classics Oval Baker**
3. **Le Creuset:** Although a large part of their collection is enamel coated cast iron, they also make a collection of stoneware products. Stoneware is one of the 3 forms of traditional ceramics (*source*) and is known for its strength. I grew up using Le Creuset products and love the sizes their dishes come in. For the foodies out there, who hasn't enjoyed something baked in their Cocottes before?
1. **Le Creuset® Signature Cherry Petite Cocotte**
  2. **Le Creuset® Signature Burgundy Oval French Oven**
  3. **Le Creuset® Cherry Square Grill Pan**
4. **Rachel Ray:** Her newly released stoneware line is so cute, and practical! I love cooking in these because when I serve dinner to family/friends I can keep the food in the dish and it still look adorable.
1. **Rachael Ray Stoneware 1-1/4-Quart and 2-1/4-Quart Oval Bubble & Brown Baker Set, White**
  2. **Rachael Ray Stoneware 9" x 13" Rectangular Lasagna Lover Pan, White**
  3. **Rachael Ray Stoneware 1.5-Quart Round Baker Rachael Ray Stoneware 1-1/2-Quart Round Baker, Blue**
5. **Haeger Potteries:** This is a great source for hard to find ceramic baking tools. I love their muffin tins and their jelly roll pans are perfect for roasting just about anything.
1. **Stoneware Muffin pan**
  2. **Haeger Large Bar Stoneware, Cookie Sheet, Jelly Roll Pan, with Handy Grip Handles**
  3. **Personal Size Stoneware Baking Sheet**

## My Top Ceramic Kitchen Tools

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### *Ceramic Skillet*

**12" 100% Ceramic Skillet with Cover and Silicone Handle Potholder** is my absolute favorite. It was the first purchase I made that helped me no longer miss nonstick! It comes in 4 convenient sizes (6.5", 9.5", 10" & 12").

### *Ceramic Pots and Pans*

As you know, many companies sell a more affordable option for a basic kitchen set. In the set you will typically find all the ceramic pots and pans you need! My favorite of these is the **14 Piece Black Versa 100% Ceramic Cookware Set**. It comes with pots, pans, lids and handles in practical shapes and sizes.

# How to Clean Ceramic Cookware

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Most ceramic cookware can go directly in the dishwasher. I however have always been worried about this (I'm probably just being over cautious).

As you know by now, ceramic cookware tends to be on the expensive side, and I don't want my laziness to ruin these purchases! I hand wash. The ceramic glaze makes it easy to get items off the surface.

## Additional cookware options

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If ceramic cookware isn't your thing, out of your price range, or you are looking for additional alternatives I would suggest the following options:

1. Cast Iron – I love cooking in my **cast iron skillet**, and find it the best surface to fry or cook meat in. Cast iron also adds iron into your diet! The downside to cooking in cast iron is it tends to be harder to clean, and need to be seasoned every so often. In addition you can't cook tomato products and other highly acidic food in this pan until it has been well seasoned over time (*Source*).
2. Stainless Steel – This is a great option, however I hate using it! Stainless steel is made from iron (which our bodies need) then coated with chromium (which also benefits our bodies). Therefore any leaching that occurs doesn't harm us (unless our bodies receive either in excess) (*Source*). I don't like stainless steel because it takes forever to clean compared to alternative options. Cooking food at high heat or for too long periods of time in these pans requires some serious scrubbing!
3. Glass Cookware – Glass cookware may not be the most versatile of options, but I love using this for cooking anything in the oven. The great part about glass is it typically comes with an adjoining lid to store food after you have baked and cooled a dish.

## Ceramic Cookware Infographic

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Here is an infographic on safe cookware to help sum up everything we just discussed:

# the ultimate guide to SAFE COOKWARE



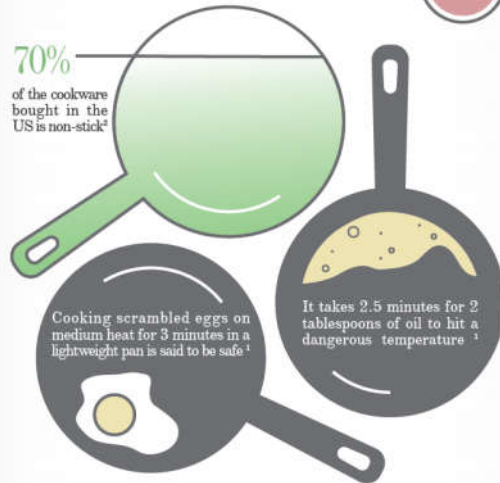
## NONSTICK COOKWARE FACTS

The chemicals used to make non-stick surfaces, *PFOAs & PFCs*, begin to breakdown and release toxins at a temperature of 500 degrees.<sup>1</sup>



70%

of the cookware bought in the US is non-stick<sup>2</sup>



Cooking scrambled eggs on medium heat for 3 minutes in a lightweight pan is said to be safe.<sup>3</sup>

It takes 2.5 minutes for 2 tablespoons of oil to hit a dangerous temperature.<sup>3</sup>

## SAFE COOKWARE



- stainless steel -

- cast iron -

- ceramic -

*pros*



doesn't leach chemicals



adds iron to food



durable



heats evenly

*pros*



doesn't leach chemicals



adds iron to food



durable



holds heat

*pros*



doesn't leach chemicals



easy to clean



durable



heats evenly

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.greenlivinggroup.com/creating-healthy-cookware-reviews-27478/nonstick-cookware-safety-facts>  
<sup>2</sup> <http://articles.mercola.com/site/article/whynter2011-07-09/another-reason-to-watch-your-nonstick-cookware.aspx>

**Do you ever cook with ceramic cookware? If not, what do you typically cook your food in?**



**Leave a comment below**

**Photo courtesy of: [Gonna Want Seconds](#) | [Chicken Tamale Casserole](#)**

**<http://www.thelittlepine.com/ceramic-cookware/>**