

Rice Cooker Buying Guide Quick Reference Handout

This handout is a primer on everything you need to know to buy the right rice cooker for you, from sizing to functions.

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1. What is a rice cooker?

Modern rice cookers are automatic, electric devices that use a timer, thermostat, and heating element to cook your rice using water and steam.

- **First proof of rice cooker:** Ceramic rice steamer from 1250 BC.
- **First electric rice cooker:** Developed by Mitsubishi Electric in 1923.
- Rice cookers became popular for home use in the 1950s.

2. Types of rice cookers

Different rice dishes and rice types will require different temperatures and timing for cooking.

Single-function rice cookers

- **Have two settings:** "cook" and "keep warm."
- Are controlled by a **single switch**.
- Typically **very affordable**.

Multi-function rice cooker

- **Have different settings and timer lengths.**
- May have functions for different **grains** (e.g. white rice, brown rice, oats).
- May have functions for different **dishes** (e.g. rice, vegetables, porridge, baby food).
- May have settings for **cleaning**.

- **More expensive**, but also more technologically advanced.

3. Rice cooker features

The different functions of a rice cooker are heavily dependent on the particular model.

- **Higher-end rice cookers** use more precise heating elements, thermostats, and moisture monitors.
- **More advanced rice cookers** use these technologies to create more consistent results.
- **Simple rice cookers** may only include one heating element and a timer.

4. Zojirushi: The big name in rice cookers

Zojirushi rice cookers are often seen as the best line on the market for texture, flavour, and all-day warming.

- These rice cookers use **fuzzy logic technology** to achieve consistent results.
- These rice cookers are known for being able to **keep rice warm all day long** without overcooking it.

5. Rice cooker vs Instant Pot comparison

The popular Instant Pot Multi-Cooker is often used as a rice cooker, especially in Canadian and American homes.

6. What size of rice cooker do I need?

Rice cookers tend to come in 3 cup, 5.5 cup, and 10 cup sizes.

- **3 cup rice cookers** are best for small households of 1-3 people. They're sometimes sold as mini rice cookers.
- **5.5 cup rice cookers are standard**. They are suitable for a single person, a couple, or a family.
- **10 cup rice cookers are large**. They can make enough rice to serve 10+ people.

Tip: A good rule of thumb is that you can make any amount of rice that's marked on your rice cooker pot. **You do not have to make a full pot** to achieve good results.

7. Rice cooker materials and care

Interior pots are almost always **lightweight and dishwasher-safe**. Check your rice cooker's manual to know for sure.

- Interior pots are typically made from **stainless steel** or **nonstick-coated aluminum**.
- **Clean the rest of your rice cooker** using a warm, damp cloth.

8. What can I make in a rice cooker?

Some dishes you can make in a rice cooker include:

- Rice
- Steamed vegetables
- Oatmeal
- Rice porridge
- Other grains like quinoa, bulgur, and barley
- Rice pudding
- Curries and soups
- Beans
- Cakes and pancakes

In East Asian homes, it's common to use your rice cooker to make one-pot meals.

9. What else can I use to make rice?

Using a rice cooker is the best and easiest way to make rice.

- You can also use **pressure cookers** and **multi-cookers**.
- You can also make rice **in a pot** on the stove.

Rice cookers tend to produce more consistent results than any other method of cooking rice.