



AUTOMATING THE KITCHEN

Kitchen gadgets play a big role in helping the staff dish up delectable meals more effectively and efficiently.

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

Hotel kitchens are busy almost 24x7 as they service all kinds of guests through the day and night. This is where kitchen gadgets come to the fore as they help ensure that the kitchen delivers on time, every time.

GADGET MIX

Professional kitchens in hotels use a variety of kitchen aids like Mandoline slicer. In the hospitality industry, hotel kitchens use a variety of kitchen gadgets to improve and streamline their operations. Some common kitchen gadgets used in hotel kitchens include:

- Commercial-grade blenders and mixers that are used to prepare smoothies, juices, sauces, dressings, and baked goods.
- Food processors that are used to chop, shred, grind, and puree ingredients for recipes such as salsa, dips, and hummus.
- Immersion blenders that are handheld gadgets that are used to puree soups, sauces, and dips directly in the pot or container.
- Sous vide machines used to cook food at precise temperatures for consistent results, making them ideal for cooking meats, seafood, and vegetables.
- Vacuum sealers used to store food for longer periods, reducing food waste and ensuring food quality.
- Combi ovens are versatile appliances that can be used to bake, roast, steam, and grill food. These ovens are ideal for cooking a wide range of dishes, including meats, vegetables, and baked goods.



Mani Mohan Pathak, Executive Chef, Pilibhit House, Haridwar - IHCL SeleQtions



Soumitra Kundu, AGM, Mice & Convention, The Orchid Hotel Pune

- Electric griddles and grills used to cook breakfast items such as pancakes, eggs, bacon, and sausage.
 - Commercial-grade coffee makers and espresso machines used to make coffee, cappuccinos, and lattes while ice machines and ice cream makers are used to produce ice and ice cream for guests.
- Mani Mohan Pathak, Executive Chef, Pilibhit House, Haridwar - IHCL SeleQtions, says, "In the digital era, the increase in tools and technique revolution is providing a solution to every industry demand and making things easier for everyone's life. Kitchen tools such as chef's knife, peeler, blender, combi-oven, frying pan and now we even have tools to measure quantity, temperature monitoring thermometer, oil rancidity check-ups and many more to produce safe, hygienic, and nutritious food. Chefs are getting acquainted with all modern tools to cook food in an easy and quick way."

DRIVING EFFICIENCIES

Kitchen gadgets are revolutionizing the food industry by improving and automating kitchen operations.

"Advanced tools are revolutionizing how hotels and restaurants operate their kitchens, leading to consistent culinary excellence, enhanced guest satisfaction, and improved operational efficiency. Advanced inventory management systems integrated with kitchen gadgets enable precise tracking of ingredient usage, optimizing procurement and minimizing waste. This helps in efficient inventory management, reducing food spoilage, and ensuring timely availability of ingredients, resulting in cost savings and improved profitability," says Soumitra Kundu, AGM, Mice & Convention, The Orchid Hotel Pune (Kamat Hotels India Ltd). Kitchen gadgets can perform tasks quickly and efficiently, reducing the time it takes to prepare and cook food. This can help kitchen staff keep up with demand during busy periods and reduce wait times for guests.

BEING EFFECTIVE

Since the pandemic, the restaurant industry has been forced to up its game to ensure business continuity. Consistency is key in cooking and automation enables focus on what we are producing, quality and consistency.

Anurag Mathur, General Manager, Sayaji Raipur, says, "Kitchen gadgets can perform repetitive tasks, such as chopping and mixing, more efficiently than a person can, allowing kitchen staff to focus on other tasks that require more skill and attention. Reducing labour costs: Kitchen gadgets can perform tasks that would normally require multiple kitchen staff members, reducing the need for extra labour and saving on labour costs. They ensure that food is prepared consistently, reducing the risk of human error, and ensuring that guests receive high-quality meals every time. Kitchen gadgets can help reduce waste by ensuring that



Saurabh Chandel, Executive Chef, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida



Vivek Kalia, Executive Chef, The Westin Kolkata Rajarhat

ingredients are used efficiently and reducing the need to discard food that is overcooked or improperly prepared. They can automate complex tasks that would otherwise require a skilled chef to perform, such as sous vide cooking or baking in a combi oven."

TECH EDGE

Innovative technology can increase the effectiveness of handling day-to-day responsibilities, such as employee scheduling, food prep tasks, equipment cleaning, and tracking incoming shipments of products. By incorporating modern kitchen gadgets and accessories, you can optimize your kitchen space, streamline your cooking processes, and create a more convenient and functional kitchen environment.

Saurabh Chandel, Executive Chef, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida, explains, "Kitchen gadgets integrate technology in several ways to enhance their functionality and convenience. Many kitchen gadgets are now being equipped with Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity; this helps the users to control from their smartphones without any hassles.



Innovative technology can increase the effectiveness of handling day-to-day responsibilities, such as employee scheduling, food prep tasks, equipment cleaning, and tracking incoming shipments of products



➔ Kitchen labour costs can be reduced by 15% using automated processes and smart appliances, which can streamline food prep and cooking tasks



➔ Gadgets are designed to reduce noise levels for a more pleasant cooking experience.

Likewise, smart ovens can help pre-heat the oven through their phone, food processors (used for chopping, blending, mixing, and shredding), smart scales for precise measurements and air fryers, increasingly popular as a healthier alternative to deep frying.”

NOW TRENDING

The kitchen gadgets’ space is witnessing several new trends. One emerging trend is a focus on food life cycle and freshness, with gadgets designed to optimize food storage, preservation, and minimize waste. Time-saving technology is also gaining traction, with gadgets that streamline food prep and cooking processes. Multitasking products that offer versatile functionality and space-saving solutions are also on the rise. Another noteworthy trend is kitchen acoustics, with gadgets designed to reduce noise levels for a more pleasant cooking experience. Additionally, smart kitchen surfaces that integrate technology for enhanced functionality and convenience are gaining popularity among modern kitchen gadget enthusiasts.



➔ Mahek Mody, Co-founder and CEO, Up



➔ Karam Dogra, Executive Chef, Sheraton Grand Palace Indore



➔ Anurag Mathur, General Manager, Sayaji Raipur

“In the new trends, the gadgets have become specific to the demand and cater to a wide range of consumers. Presently, gadgets are available with a wide variety of ranges and you may choose the gadget as per your demand to suit your specifications. The gadgets help us save time and technology, helps culinarians meet specific demands and make some great food if combined with right techniques,” says Vivek Kalia, Executive Chef, The Westin Kolkata Rajarhat.

This includes kitchen gadgets such as touchless faucets, automatic soap dispensers, and hands-free trash cans. With evolving technology, we now have affordable smart connected devices which can manage complex cooking processes with minimal human intervention. “The kitchen, especially post the pandemic, has become a space for everyone to come together, and not just for the person in charge of cooking and feeding the household. Smart kitchen assistants like delishUp by upliance.ai use AI technology to provide guided recipes and automate cooking pro-

cesses such as chopping, stirring, and cooking making cooking accessible to everyone regardless of their skills in the kitchen,” says Mahek Mody, Co-founder and CEO, Up.

USE IT RIGHT

Training is an essential aspect when it comes to using a new gadget, but it also depends on the intricacy and functionality of the device as well as the user’s experience and familiarity with kitchen tools. “Each gadget may have specific requirements for cleaning, maintenance, and usage, and neglecting to follow these instructions could lead to subpar performance or accidents. It is crucial to carefully read and adhere to the instructions and safety guidelines provided for each gadget to ensure safe and efficient utilisation,” says Karam Dogra, Executive Chef, Sheraton Grand Palace Indore.

Smart kitchen appliances, including ovens, multi-cookers, and fridges, are becoming more and more common. Kitchen gadgets are now often paired with companion apps that unlock a wealth of additional functionality and features. These apps can offer recipe suggestions, meal planning tools, timers, and other smart features that streamline cooking processes and elevate the overall experience. It’s like having a personal culinary assistant guide you through every step of your cooking journey, making it more enjoyable and efficient.

Nishesh Seth, Executive Chef, Shangri-La Bengaluru, says, “The integration of food with technology also brings with it its own perils, such as handy usage and extensive training and care in the use of these equipment. The complications lead to a lot of training and re-training required at various stages, as a certain skill set is necessary to operate them.”



➔ Timing instances that require human intervention, such as monitoring cooking temperatures or timing food items, can be minimized with automated timers and sensors



➔ Operating expenses can be lowered by 10% by optimizing energy usage and reducing food waste with the help of technology



➔ Nishesh Seth, Executive Chef, Shangri-La Bengaluru



➔ Mihir Kane, Executive Chef, Fairmont Jaipur

DOING THE MATH

Kitchen gadgets can result in significant time and cost savings. For instance, kitchen labour costs can be reduced by 15% using automated processes and smart appliances, which can streamline food prep and cooking tasks.

“Operating expenses can be lowered by 10% by optimizing energy usage and reducing food waste with the help of technology. Timing instances that require human intervention, such as monitoring cooking temperatures or timing food items, can be minimized with automated timers and sensors. Overall, the increased efficiency and productivity brought about by kitchen gadgets and technology can lead to improved profitability for the kitchen operations,” says Kundu.

“Modern multipurpose combi ovens enable us to cook food with different methods of cooking like steaming, braising, roasting at the same time which has helped to an extent wherein we can feed the recipes and temperature of cooking as well. Best example to quote is edible sheets which we customize for our customers in fraction of seconds, and can be used in amenities, cakes and many more,” says Mihir Kane, Executive Chef, Fairmont Jaipur. Time indeed for a smart kitchen!