



Jessica's Cooking Equipment Blog

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Seen at the Housewares Show – Portable Induction Cooktops

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How many sightings of something does it take to qualify as a trend? However many it is, I'm pretty sure I saw enough portable induction cooktops being introduced at the International Home + Housewares Show to declare them as a trend. These slim, sleek devices usually only measure a little more than a foot square, and can serve as a portable extra burner. Proponents of induction cooking point out that it's far more efficient than gas and electric stoves, and companies claim that these cooktops can cook food up to 50 percent faster as well. The science behind can be a little confusing, but it has to do with a magnetic field that directs heat directly into the pan, which means that the glass surface of the cooktop remains cool to the touch (see how the dollar in the photo doesn't scorch, even under a pan of boiling water?).



© Vita-Mix Corp.

The possibilities of what you could do with a portable induction cooktop seem limitless: It can serve as both an extra burner and a warming plate for parties and large holiday dinners; it can be used outdoors, on a boat or in an RV or a camper; it can be used in place of a stove in the summer to keep the kitchen cool and to save energy; and it can be used at the dinner table for tableside cooking.

I particularly liked Fagor's model (shown), which has six power levels (temperatures range from 90°F to 430°F), a countdown timer, and safety features like a child lock and an automatic shutoff if there's no pan on the cooktop for 60 seconds. It's also one of the cheapest on the market, at around \$199. The company also debuted a 2-burner model, which will sell for \$499.99 and will be available in stores in July. The single burner size is already available to buy at certain retailers.

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