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### Planning : Selecting Electrical Housewares

Isabel McGibney

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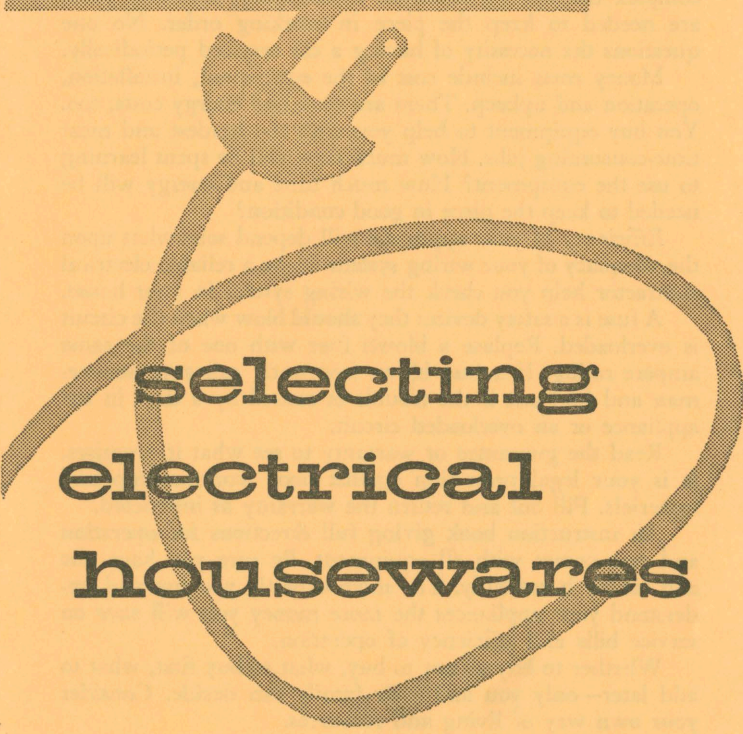
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# PLANNING:



## selecting electrical housewares

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South Dakota State College, Brookings, South Dakota

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE

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## Planning: Electrical Housewares

By Isabel McGibney

*Extension Home Management Specialist*

When you buy electrical appliances, **only you** know which is right for you. So think about it. Shop the field. Compare pieces in several places.

Consider material, workmanship, size, shape, standard or deluxe features, price, and expected life of appliance.

The best brand is the one with the special conveniences you want, and sold by the dealer with the know how to properly install it and provide good service.

The more machines we use in housekeeping the more complex the upkeep becomes. Occasionally, technical skills are needed to keep the piece in working order. No one questions the necessity of having a car serviced periodically.

Money costs include cost of the equipment, installation, operation and upkeep. There are time and energy costs, too. You buy equipment to help you with the hardest and most time-consuming jobs. How much time will be spent learning to use the equipment? How much time and energy will be needed to keep the piece in good condition?

Efficiency of your appliance will depend somewhat upon the adequacy of your wiring system. Have a reliable electrical contractor help you check the wiring system in your house.

A fuse is a safety device: they should blow when the circuit is overloaded. Replace a blown fuse with one of the same ampere rating. If a fuse blows frequently call your serviceman and find out if the trouble is caused by a flaw in the appliance or an overloaded circuit.

Read the guarantee or warranty to see what it promises. It is your legal protection against poor workmanship and materials. Fill out and return the warranty as instructed.

An instruction book giving full directions for operation and care comes with all equipment. Be sure you have one and **follow it carefully**. The more expertly you use and understand your appliances the more money you will save on service bills and efficiency of operation.

Whether to buy or not to buy, what to buy first, what to add later—only you and your family can decide. Consider your own way of living and resources.

### Selection Features

**Construction:** well balanced to set firmly. All parts fastened together firmly. Material suitable to purpose and easy to clean, heat resistant glass, rustproof and non-tarnishing metal, acid resistant porcelain enamel. Accessories easily attached. Heat unit well insulated to protect table. Handles of a size and shape which will not turn or slip in the hands when being lifted or carried. Handles and controls of heat resistant material. Non-scratching feet, legs, handles, controls. Tight fitting covers to prevent heat loss.

**Design:** smooth and simple for easy cleaning. Detachable parts easy to remove and clean.

**Operation:** thermostatic controls for temperature selection easy to see, to understand, to reach, and to operate. Follow manufacturers instructions. Learn to use the appliance for more than one job. Avoid pieces which duplicate jobs. Use on wall outlets or appliance circuits. Generally, only two appliances can be used on one circuit. Convenient signal light—indicates temperature.

**Safety:** The Underwriters Laboratories (UL) seal is placed on appliances which meet its standards of safety against fire and shock. The seal may be on the bottom of the appliance, name plate, or tag. The seal will be on the appliance if it has been approved. The same is true of the cord. The seal on the cord alone does not indicate that the appliance was approved.

**Care:** **Never get the electrical units, heating wires, or motors wet.** Never immerse the appliance in water unless the manufacturers instructions state it can be done. Disconnect appliance from **outlet** first. Pull on the **plug** not the cord. Cool the appliance before storing. Wrap the cord loosely—avoid kinks or sharp bends. Follow the manufacturers instructions. Oil motors as suggested by the manufacturer. Use on currents—AC, DC,—as directed.

**Cost of Operation:** As bills are usually paid by the month it would be easier to figure the hours of use on a monthly basis.

To find the rate per kilowatt hour per month take the total cost of the monthly bill for electricity and divide by the kilowatt hours (kwh) used and the answer will give you the average cost per kwh per month. Find how many watts the appliance uses. This is on every piece—usually the bottom.  
 $\text{divide watts by } 1,000 = \text{kilowatts (kw)}$   
 $\text{kilowatts (kw)} \times \text{hours of use} = \text{kilowatt hours (kwh)}$   
 $\text{kilowatt hours (kwh)} \times \text{rate per kwh} = \text{cost of operation}$

### Other Features to Watch

#### TOASTERS

**Non-automatic:** Usually toasts one side of the bread at a time. Operates manually—to turn off or on and to turn toast for browning other side. Needs constant attention while in operation. Needs few repairs because parts are so simple. Low wattage—low cost.

**Automatic:** Toasts both sides of bread at once. Electricity automatically turns off when bread is browned. Dial for selecting degree of brownness wanted. Number of slices of bread toasted—1 to 4 (they are designed to take sliced bakery bread). Crumb tray easy to locate and operate.

**Use:** Always disconnect the cord from the outlet before cleaning or removing lodged bread—avoids shock. Do not use fork or other sharp instruments for removing bread—avoid damage to delicate heating wires. Wattage 1,100.

**Care:** Wipe with slightly damp cloth then polish with soft dry one. Occasionally clean with fine silver polish. Buffing will make it look like new.

#### WAFFLE BAKER AND GRILLS

Combinations allow for interchange of grids—waffle or flat for broiling, frying or toasting. Expandable hinges to let waffle rise and allow for various food thicknesses. Overflow groove to catch excess batter. Well balanced when lid is open.

**Use:** Preheat baker until signal light goes out. Overheating shortens the life of the heating unit. It may discolor finish and cause sticking. It may also burn off the protective coating or grease.

Allow 3 to 4 minutes for baking the first waffle. The rest will take slightly longer unless the baker is allowed to heat between waffles.

Crisp waffles usually require thin batter and bake longer. Use the right amount of batter—overflowing causes burned-on grease which is difficult to get off. Add extra fat to prepared mixes. Cool baker with grids open—when still warm wipe with a dry cloth to remove excess grease and crumbs. Bake only when grids are hot enough—usually the indicator light goes out. Lift cover when batter is done—stops steaming or when automatic controls indicate it is done. Wattage—up to 1,000.

**Care:** Use soft brush or cloth to brush out crumbs. Do not wash grids. A brown film on the grids prevents sticking and browns waffles better. If the baker needs cleaning, place a paper napkin soaked in household ammonia between the grids and leave overnight. The ammonia will loosen the “cooked on” grease. Then rub the grids with fine steel wool and wash with a cloth. Grease the grids with unsalted fat or oil. Heat baker to baking temperature and let cool. Then bake as usual, however, the first waffle will be quite greasy and will need to be thrown out.

#### COFFEE MAKER

**Vacuum type:** Has two bowls. The water is heated and forced from the lower bowl. The upper bowl holds the dry coffee. Here the hot water and coffee mix. Then the vacuum returns the liquid coffee through a filter into the lower bowl. The top bowl is removed for serving.

**Thermostatic control:** Two heat units—one for brewing and one for keeping coffee hot. Cover which will not fall off when pouring or let steam escape. Good balance when pouring—non-drip spouts. Protective device to turn off current if water boils away. Marks on inner surface as a guide to filling.

**Percolator type:** The heated water is forced up through a small tube then sprays out over the coffee held in a perforated, covered basket. Wattage—up to 1,000.

**Care:** Coffee has a better flavor from a clean coffee maker. Wash thoroughly with soap and water. Leave it open to air out when not in use. Have bowls with wide mouths for easy cleaning. a mixture of water and baking soda or of cream of tartar (1 tablespoon in 1 quart water) will help remove rancid coffee flavor or odor. Follow manufacturers directions carefully if using coffee stain removers.



## SKILLETS

Temperature settings printed on the appliance. Can be set to fry, braise, saute, stew, bake, or to be used as a chafing dish or warmer. Electric skillets vary according to shape—round, square, rectangular. Some are shallow—some deep enough for fat frying.

**Use:** Follow directions carefully and avoid overheating. Learn to use for preparing a variety of foods. Wattage—1,100.

**Care:** Clean thoroughly after each use. Clean temperature controls with damp cloth. Store with lid off. Though easily darkened by alkalies in food and water, aluminum can be cleaned with metal wool. Rubbing with household acids—vinegar, lemon juice, cream of tartar—will brighten darkened areas, or cook acid foods—rhubarb or tomato—in the pan. After using an acid for cleaning, the acid must be thoroughly washed off.

## DEEP FRYERS

Thermostatic heat control—can set to scald, roast, steam, deep fat fry, bake, and warm. Vary according to shape—round, square, and rectangle. Wire basket to hold food. Method of draining fat—some have spigot at bottom.

**Use:** Same as for skillet. Wattage—up to 1,500.

**Safety:** Hot fat can cause severe burns. Place utensil where there is no chance of it tipping or falling.

**Care:** Clean after each use. Disconnect, cool, wipe inside and out, dry thoroughly and store. Take special care to see that the draining tube is clean.

## ROASTER AND CASSEROLES

May range in size from three quarts to twenty quarts. They will roast, bake, stew, steam, boil; and with a grill attachment broil, toast or fry.

**Storage:** Some have storage cabinets and accessories such as extra dishes, broiler, grill and timer. Fiber glass insulation, baked enamel exterior, and acid-resistant porcelain enamel interior. Outer frame of welded construction. Inset pan and lifting rack for convenience.

Wattage: casseroles—up to 800; roaster—up to 1,650.

**Care:** Thoroughly clean after each use. Wash inset pan, utensils and cover as any other household utensil. Remove heating element in broiler-griddle attachment before cleaning. Handle heating element carefully and avoid breakage of wires or insulators.

## MIXERS

**Motors:** Runs quietly; radio-interference eliminator; sealed in lubrication, large enough to do the jobs required, (heavy duty mixer,  $\frac{1}{8}$  horsepower, for mixing heavy dough); starting switch and multi-speed control with dial easy to read and reach; full steady power at all speeds; light weight and easy to detach in portable models.

**Beaters:** Off center to allow for maximum pouring space; fit the contour of the mixing bowl and rotate over the full bottom of the bowl; just clear the bottom of the bowl; rust proof

and sturdy; automatic release for convenience; guard on beater shaft to prevent food climbing into machinery.

**Bowls:** Heat resistant glass, tinned steel or stainless steel; sides almost straight; turntable to rotate bowl automatically; turntable adjustable so beaters are in correct position for different size bowls.

**Stands:** Well-balanced and heavy enough to prevent tipping; motor easy to tip back to drain beaters and remove bowls and beaters.

**Types:** Stationary—motor and beaters attached to stand. Can do the mixing while you do other work. Portable—motor and beaters may be used with stand or detached and held over the bowl or pan. Portable Hand Mixer—only motor and beaters. Easy to handle but needs to be held. Cannot do other work while mixing. Good for all but heavier jobs. Should be able to stand on end so drippings fall into bowl.

**Accessories:** Select only those which are easy to use and will be used often. (Juicer, grinder, slicer, shredder, colander, bean slicer, can opener, coffee grinder, knife sharpener, polisher, pea sheller, potato peeler, blender.) Wattage—100.

## BLENDERS

**Motor:** One, two, or three speeds. Heavy enough to do the job. Control markings easy to read and reach. Well balanced—will not tip easily. Food container of a size for your purpose and with a cover. Large opening to clean easily. Cutting blades of stainless steel.

**Use:** Liquify, puree, grate, blend, or chop food. Pour liquid food into jar then add solids. Solids may be added through small opening in cover to prevent splattering. Put cover on before starting motor. Turn motor on and off several times for chopping. Wattage—up to 400.

**Caution:** The blades are very sharp—always turn off blender before using scraper or handling in any way except for adding food.

**Care:** Wash food container like any other utensil. Be careful not to get cut when washing the blades. Wipe motor casing with damp cloth.

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