

KAM

Induction cooktops growing in popularity

By Shawn Dinsmore

A recent New York Times article quoted a chef as saying it was like graduating from a Volkswagen Beetle to a Ferrari. She was referring to her discovery of induction cook tops, which offer a non-contact method of heating using magnetic fields to transfer energy directly to cookware. The induction element stays cool, while the pots and pans heat up rapidly for extremely efficient cooking.

A cooking zone will only heat up when a suitable magnetic metal pan is placed on it. Proper cookware to be used on an induction surface needs to be able to support a magnetic field. The rule of thumb is that if a magnet readily clings to the base of the cookware, that piece is induction ready. High-grade magnetized stainless steel and enameled cast iron are usually induction-friendly, while copper, glass and aluminum are not.

Most induction burners also have size recognition. Heat is only generated where the pan is detected, saving energy and time.

Induction cooking actually has been around for decades, but only recently has demand driven prices down and selection up. In the last two years, Viking, GE and Samsung all have begun selling induction ranges.

A recent industry survey suggests that induction cooktops are going to take off; 22 percent said their next range or cooktop will use induction, partly for efficient cooking and partly because of conservation concerns.

When it comes to price, a Viking induction range can top out at \$6,000, but some models now cost a little over \$1,500.

Induction may not be for everyone, but here are some key advantages:

- Your heat level is *every bit* as instantaneous--and as exact--as with gas, yet with none of the many drawbacks of gas.
- Energy is supplied *directly* to the cooking vessel by the magnetic field; thus, almost all of the source energy gets transferred to that vessel. Less than half the energy in gas gets used versus more than 80 percent for induction.
- The cooktop barely gets warm except directly under the cooking vessel. No more burned fingers, no more baked-on spills, no more danger with children around.

All available research shows very clearly that there are no safety issues regarding induction, including concerns about radiation.

Because KAM sells many options of cooktops, we are objective in our evaluations. We encourage you to visit us and learn more about induction cooking.

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