Pots and pans for family cooking

My first choice is stainless steel

For everyday cooking, I recommend a pot and a frying pan with an **uncoated stainless steel interior**. With those two pieces, you can boil food, make sauces and cook meat or vegetables over low heat.

Why does it matter if a sauce is acidic?

Tomatoes, lemon juice and vinegar contain acids. During cooking, those acids can dissolve small amounts of metal from the pan's surface, allowing it to pass into the sauce. Longer contact increases this transfer, especially with unlined copper or uncoated aluminium.

Stainless steel contains chromium, which forms a protective film on its surface. That's why **you can cook tomato sauce in a stainless steel pot**. Small amounts of nickel and chromium can still pass into the sauce, especially when the pot is new.

How to cook without forming a crust



Put the vegetables or meat in the pan with a little water or stock. Cover and cook over low heat. If the liquid evaporates and the food starts to stick, add another splash before it burns.

If you already own other cookware

Unenamelled cast iron. It holds heat well, even over a low flame. For an acidic sauce that needs to simmer for a long time, use stainless steel or enamelled cast iron with an intact interior.

Glass or ceramic cookware. For baking, look for an "oven-safe" label. Before using a casserole dish on the hob, check that it's suitable for your type of hob.

What I recommend avoiding

1 Non-stick frying pans

I recommend avoiding non-stick coatings, including those sold as “ceramic”. I prefer uncoated stainless steel because it lasts and has no coating that can peel away.

What is PTFE, and when does it matter?

PTFE (polytetrafluoroethylene) is the polymer that keeps food from sticking. Its chains are made of repeating units, each containing two carbon atoms and four fluorine atoms.

If you already own a PTFE-coated pan, **avoid heating it empty or over high heat.** An overheated coating can release irritating fumes. Use wooden or silicone utensils and replace the pan if the coating peels. A pan labelled “PFOA-free” can still contain PTFE. Both belong to the PFAS family.

A “ceramic-coated” pan is a metal pan with a surface coating. A ceramic casserole dish is made from fired clay.

2 Ceramics of uncertain suitability for food

Some glazes release lead or cadmium, two **heavy metals**. **Keep these pieces for decoration.** In children, even low levels of lead exposure can affect the developing brain and interfere with learning. Cadmium accumulates in the kidneys and can damage them over time.

3 Pots with exposed copper

If you can see bare copper on the inside, avoid using the pot. Copper can pass into food and, in excess, cause nausea or vomiting.

4 Pots with chipped enamel inside

Stop using pots that are shedding pieces of enamel from their cooking surface.

5 Acidic sauces in uncoated aluminium

Use a different pot to cook or store tomatoes, lemon or very salty foods. Acid, salt and wear increase the amount of aluminium that passes into food. An intact anodised layer reduces this transfer.

What to look for when buying cookware

Look for **“uncoated stainless steel”** in the description of the interior. If the product listing only mentions the base, check which material touches the food. The base may contain aluminium between two layers of steel to distribute heat.

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United States



IKEA 365+

Pot with lid · 5 qt

View at IKEA USA

Article no. 505.779.14



SENSUELL

Uncoated frying pan · 11 in

View at IKEA USA

Article no. 105.770.15

Photos from the official IKEA product listings.