



Story by Virginia Pearson

You walk into your favorite store ready to pick out items for your bridal registry. The store is your playground. Then you see all the possibilities and the questions start – stainless vs. non-stick? Santoku vs. chef’s knife? What’s a salt pig and how do I feed it?

Navigating the world of bridal registries can be overwhelming. While it’s great to imagine having everything you’ve ever seen on “Food Network,” will you really use it or will it just take up valuable cabinet space and end up in your first garage sale?

Cookware. Every well-stocked kitchen should have a set of quality cookware. Don’t skimp or you’ll be replacing pieces on a regular basis. The basic question is stainless or non-stick. Most professional chefs have a combination of both. Stainless steel cookware is ideal for searing, caramelizing, roasting and broiling because it can withstand high heat on the stovetop or in the oven.

Non-stick cookware is preferred for applications where a quick release is desirable, as with omelets. A non-stick coating on both the inside and outside keeps the cookware looking new and avoids baked-on stains on the

exterior. With both types of cookware, look for pieces that can go from stovetop to oven for more flexibility. Glass lids offer the advantage of being able to monitor the progress of your food without losing heat by removing the lid.

Cooks Tools. For the juiciest chicken breasts, a meat tenderizer is essential to flatten the meat to an even thickness and avoid burnt edges and undercooked centers. A good set of silicone spatulas can be used in a hot pan without fear of melting, and can be used in both stainless and non-stick cookware. Likewise, silicone-coated chef’s tongs can be used in either cookware and are ideal for frying and sautéing. Other necessary tools are a slotted turner, both regular and slotted spoons, a pasta fork and

a ladle.

Serving Pieces. A good neutral (white or beige) set of dinnerware (eight place settings) can be “dressed up” or “dressed down” depending on choice of colors, shapes and accessories. Many patterns even offer coordinated Christmas salad plates and serving pieces. Everyday serving pieces include a large platter, vegetable bowls and a large bowl for pasta or salad. The trend seems to be toward more casual dining and entertaining. Modern brides say they rarely, if ever, use their fine china and silver.

Glassware. Essentials include iced teas and juice glasses, as well as general purpose wine glasses, highballs and old-fashioned. A variety of specialty glasses such as champagne flutes, martini and margarita glasses aren’t just for mixed drinks but can also add a festive touch to simple desserts or appetizers.

Entertaining. Be sure to choose a good wine bottle opener, one that is durable and easy to use. An ice bucket, cheese serving tools and cheese boards, decorative platters and other serving pieces bode well for a simple get-together with friends.

Outdoors. For outdoor entertaining, a good set of acrylic plates is a must, preferably ones designed with a cup or wine glass holder to allow guests to hold their plate and drink with one

