

Seasonal Eating
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Small Appliances Help Holiday Cooking
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As we begin the holiday season, there is lots of cooking that needs to happen. Families are busy and need fast and easy dinners after events. Parties call for appetizers and potluck dishes to share. Large holiday meals call for multiple items to be cooked all at once.

To help navigate this frenzy of cooking, small appliances make meals and prep quick and easy. There are many appliances such as hand mixers, high speed blenders, electric pressure cookers, air fryers and more that can not only cook things quickly but also help free up oven and stovetop space during large meals.

Hand mixers can often be used right in the pot to whip potatoes with coated beaters to protect the finish. A hand mixer is essential for jobs like making 7-minute frosting where it cooks over a double boiler.

High speed blenders make more than just smoothies. They can whip cream, puree soups, create vinaigrettes for salads and vegetables and make glazes for meats. And the blender's portable cousin, the immersion blender, can puree soups and sauces right in the pan they cook in – cutting down on cleanup.

Slow cookers let us throw a recipe together and walk away to do other things while it cooks. For parties and entertaining, slow cookers keep appetizers like meatballs or baked dips hot and are great for serving hot drinks like chocolate or cider. On big days, the slow cooker can make an extra meat like ham or roast while the turkey is in the oven or be used to cook side dishes without tying up the oven.

Electric pressure cookers (Instant Pots) can create a meal in minutes instead of hours. So after a busy day of shopping or events, a roast can cook in an hour instead of four or macaroni and cheese can be on the table in minutes. These appliances can also make quick work of side dishes on the holiday table.

And air fryers can heat up frozen prepared foods or left overs to crispy goodness in a short time or make appetizers like wings or meatballs quick and easy. The air fried shrimp below can be used as a quick meal or an appetizer for a holiday gathering.

So as you plan your big holiday celebrations or just family meals during this busy season, turn to small appliances to help you get dinner on the table. For more information and recipes check out the Seasonal Eating page at bedford.tennessee.edu.



Air Fryer Shrimp with Comeback Sauce

These shrimp are quick and easy to prepare. Frozen shrimp can be quickly thawed in cold water. Use these for a quick meal or an appetizer. You can chill the shrimp or serve them warm. If you don't have an air fryer, just roast in the oven on a sheet pan until opaque and cooked through, at 400 degrees for about 8-10 minutes.

1 pound extra-large raw shrimp, peeled with tails on
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 teaspoon Old Bay Seasoning
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon onion powder
1/2 cup mayonnaise
2 tablespoons ketchup
1 teaspoon horseradish
1/2 - 1 teaspoon Tabasco sauce, adjust as desired
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

Preheat the air fryer to 400 degrees. In a bowl toss the shrimp and olive oil. In a small bowl, stir together the Old Bay seasoning, paprika, garlic powder and onion powder. Add to the oiled shrimp and toss to coat. Lay the shrimp in the fryer basket in a single layer. Air fry for 4 minutes or until opaque and cooked through. Let cool slightly. For the sauce, in a bowl, stir together the mayonnaise, ketchup, horseradish, Tabasco, garlic powder, pepper and salt. Serve the shrimp with the sauce for dipping.