

# RATING FOOD PROCESSORS

TOP CHOICE

BEST VALUE



KITCHENAID

CUISINART PRO



CUISINART PREP



BOSCH 5000



OSTER



BOSCH 5200



BLACK & DECKER



HAMILTON BEACH

Each of eight food processors was put through a total of 11 tests to evaluate its performance at various food processor tasks. Special attachments were evaluated separately (see page 27 for details). The food processors are listed in order of preference based on their overall scores in the following tests.

## RATINGS

GOOD: ★★★

FAIR: ★★

POOR: ★

**PRICE:** Prices paid in Boston-area stores, national mail-order catalogs, and on Web sites.

**BOWL CAPACITY/BASE WEIGHT:** We chose models with a capacity of 11 cups, or as close as possible. If a manufacturer did not make an 11-cup model, we tested its largest food processor. Base weights (as measured in the test kitchen) ranged from just under 5 pounds to more than 12 pounds. We found a correlation between heavier bases and superior performance.

**GRATING/SLICING:** We grated cheddar cheese and carrots and sliced plum tomatoes and potatoes. We looked for dry, consistent shreds and clean, even slices.

**CHOPPING:** We chopped parsley as well as a mixture of celery, carrots, and onions. We looked for a dry, even mixture of same-sized pieces. With the exception of the KitchenAid (which comes with a mini-bowl insert), all models fared poorly on the parsley test.

**GRINDING:** We processed whole walnuts to the texture of coarse meal and a loaf of stale bread to bread crumbs. Minimal processing should produce dry ground nuts and even bread crumbs.

**PASTRY DOUGH:** We pulsed together vegetable shortening, butter, and dry ingredients, looking for coarse, yellow crumbs and pea-sized chunks of butter after about ten 1-second pulses.

**BREAD DOUGH:** We doubled our recipe for pissaladière dough (see March/April 2004 issue) for a load with 4 cups of flour. We looked for a smooth, satiny dough in less than 90 seconds.

**SOUP PUREE:** We tested how much liquid the workbowl could handle, then pureed a mock-soup mixture of water and steamed broccoli. We checked for leaks and passed the resulting puree through a coarse sieve, looking for unprocessed chunks. Any leaks or large chunks resulted in a poor rating.

**TESTERS' COMMENTS:** Observations about design or performance in specific tests.

## RECOMMENDED

**KitchenAid Professional 670, KFP670VH**  
**PRICE: \$279.99**  
**BOWL CAPACITY: 11 cups**  
**BASE WEIGHT: 12 lb 1 oz**

GRATING/SLICING: ★★★  
 CHOPPING: ★★★  
 GRINDING: ★★★  
 PASTRY DOUGH: ★★★  
 BREAD DOUGH: ★★  
 SOUP PUREE: ★★

## TESTERS' COMMENTS

The prep whiz: chopped and sliced as cleanly and evenly as a carefully wielded knife—and a lot faster. Comes with a mini-bowl attachment that makes quick work of parsley; bigger bowls in other models beat parsley into a sorry, bruised state. Leaked slightly during the puree test.

**Cuisinart Pro Custom 11, DLC-85**  
**PRICE: \$159.99**  
**BOWL CAPACITY: 11 cups**  
**BASE WEIGHT: 10 lb 9 oz**

GRATING/SLICING: ★★★  
 CHOPPING: ★★  
 GRINDING: ★★★  
 PASTRY DOUGH: ★★★  
 BREAD DOUGH: ★★★  
 SOUP PUREE: ★★

The original Cuisinart has changed little since its 1973 debut, but it handled every test (except bread dough) just as well as the newer, more expensive Cuisinart. In fact, it was better than the newer Cuisinart at grating and slicing and making pie dough. The feed tube design is "a pain."

**Cuisinart Prep 11 Plus, DLC-2011**  
**PRICE: \$199.99**  
**BOWL CAPACITY: 11 cups**  
**BASE WEIGHT: 11 lb 3 oz**

GRATING/SLICING: ★★  
 CHOPPING: ★★  
 GRINDING: ★★★  
 PASTRY DOUGH: ★★★  
 BREAD DOUGH: ★★★  
 SOUP PUREE: ★★

This redesigned Cuisinart has some nice new features. The ultimate machine for bread: Under a heavy load of dough, it purred like a Mercedes. Fruit and vegetable processing was less than perfect, however. Testers weren't wild about the feed tube design on either this or the Pro Custom model, although they are the widest on the market.

## RECOMMENDED WITH RESERVATIONS

**Bosch 5000, MCM 5000 UC**  
**PRICE: \$139**  
**BOWL CAPACITY: 12 cups**  
**BASE WEIGHT: 6 lb 2 oz**

GRATING/SLICING: ★★  
 CHOPPING: ★★  
 GRINDING: ★★  
 PASTRY DOUGH: ★★  
 BREAD DOUGH: ★★  
 SOUP PUREE: ★★★

Didn't perform any task exceptionally well, but didn't fail miserably at any task, either. If you can live with less-than-perfect but still passable potato slices and pastry doughs, you might buy this model and save a few dollars. Inexplicably, this model struggled on the easiest test—grinding bread crumbs.

## NOT RECOMMENDED

**Oster Inspire 3200**  
**PRICE: \$69.99**  
**BOWL CAPACITY: 10 cups**  
**BASE WEIGHT: 10 lb 15 oz**

GRATING/SLICING: ★★  
 CHOPPING: ★  
 GRINDING: ★★★  
 PASTRY DOUGH: ★★  
 BREAD DOUGH: ★★  
 SOUP PUREE: ★★

This unit almost got a passing grade—until it brutalized the carrots, celery, and onions in the chopping test. If you want a food processor and absolutely can't afford anything more expensive, this one is the best of the really cheap choices. Just use a knife to chop veggies.

**Bosch 5200, MCM 5200 UC**  
**PRICE: \$199.99**  
**BOWL CAPACITY: 12 cups**  
**BASE WEIGHT: 6 lb 5 oz**

GRATING/SLICING: ★  
 CHOPPING: ★  
 GRINDING: ★★★  
 PASTRY DOUGH: ★★  
 BREAD DOUGH: ★★  
 SOUP PUREE: ★★★

Surprisingly bad performance during chopping, slicing, and grating tests, but several of its extra attachments—blender, whip, and juicer—proved useful. Nice extras, but designers seem to have forgotten about core functions.

**Black & Decker Power Pro 11, FP 1500**  
**PRICE: \$47.99**  
**BOWL CAPACITY: 10 cups**  
**BASE WEIGHT: 4 lb 15 oz**

GRATING/SLICING: ★  
 CHOPPING: ★  
 GRINDING: ★★★  
 PASTRY DOUGH: ★★  
 BREAD DOUGH: ★  
 SOUP PUREE: ★

Although it mimics the look and feel of a high-end food processor, even simple tasks proved too much for the Black & Decker, and forget about more difficult tasks such as making bread dough or pureeing soup.

**Hamilton Beach PrepStar, 70550R**  
**PRICE: \$35**  
**BOWL CAPACITY: 8 cups**  
**BASE WEIGHT: 5 lb 2 oz**

GRATING/SLICING: ★  
 CHOPPING: ★★  
 GRINDING: ★★★  
 PASTRY DOUGH: ★★  
 BREAD DOUGH: ★  
 SOUP PUREE: ★

Fine if you use a food processor once a year, at Thanksgiving, to grind bread crumbs for stuffing. Otherwise, mediocre-to-poor performance on every other test. You don't get what you don't pay for.