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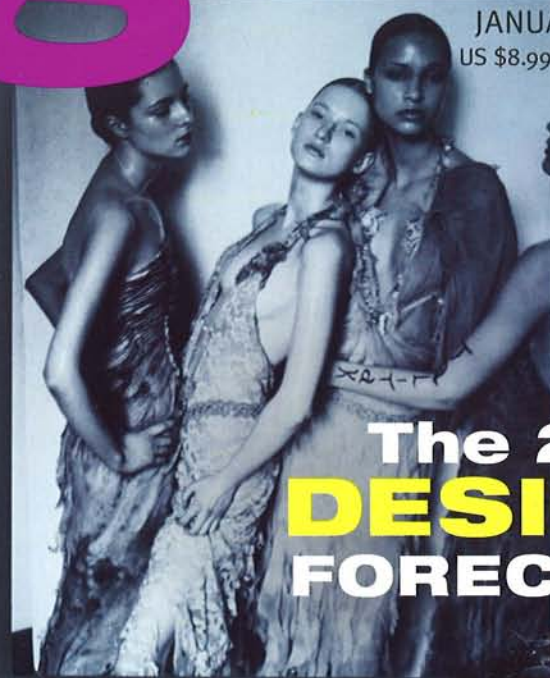
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Meg Mathews
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RECALL: 4/1/2011

fyi

The constellation of Orion is also sometimes known as The Saucepan because of its clear join-the-dots frame. For this reason, Alessi named its range of saucepans *La Cintura di Orione*, Italian for The Belt of Orion.



Copper

The most expensive of all saucepan materials, copper conducts heat extremely well and produces excellent cooking results. Virtually all styles will have stainless-steel linings to strengthen the copper frame. While copper can't be used directly on an induction hob, some companies are addressing this by producing special induction plates. Usually made from stainless steel, induction plates are flat, handled discs of metal that you place between a copper pan and the induction hob. The steel makes a magnetic connection with the hob top, heats up and acts as a stand-in hob for your copper pan. Unlike other saucepan materials, copper cookware is prone to tarnishing, so has to be treated regularly with a special cleaner to keep it in tip-top condition.

Copper cookware, from £132 for a 12cm saucepan, Mauviel at Divertimenti

Cast iron

Cast-iron pans are notoriously heavy, but they're great for slow-cooking dishes, as they're good heat conductors and retain heat brilliantly. Available in either natural plain black or enamelled in a wide variety of shades, cast-iron cookware is a great option if you want to add colour to your kitchen scheme.

'With cast-iron saucepans, you only need low to medium heat as you can make use of the residual heat when cooking,' says Laura Jones at Le Creuset. 'Cast iron is also suitable for all hob types, including induction, making it a reliable addition to any kitchen.'



Cast-iron cookware in Teal, from £70 for a 16cm saucepan, Le Creuset.

Source book

- **Stainless steel** Alessi, All-Clad, Anolon, John Lewis, Judge, Le Creuset, Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's, Stellar, Tefal.
- **Aluminium** John Lewis, Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's, Tefal.
- **Hard-anodised aluminium** Anolon, John Lewis, Sainsbury's, Tefal.
- **Cast iron** Chasseur, Le Creuset.
- **Copper** Alessi, John Lewis, La Cornue, Mauviel.

BUYER'S GUIDE *to...*

Saucepans

Invest in the right option and your cooking kit's most hardworking component will last a lifetime, so gen up before you hit the sales...

WORDS GINEVRA BENEDETTI



Good-quality pans should last a lifetime and, as with any investment piece, it pays to know what to look for before forking out. So, what makes a good saucepan? 'Even heat distribution is important,' says designer Sebastian Conran, and is down to the material used. 'In the old days, the finest saucepans were made from copper silvered with tin, to give the most even heat distribution. Today, the majority are made of aluminium, which has a high temperature capability.'

You'll also need to bear in mind the type

of hob you cook on. Gas hobs work with any kind of saucepan, but ceramic hobs, or those with electric elements, work best with flat-bottomed pans. The underside of the pan should touch the entire surface of the element to ensure consistent heat coverage. Induction hobs only work when the surface makes a magnetic connection, so you're restricted to pans made of cast iron or steel.

Also think about storage – stackable pans are easier – and lids. Sebastian adds, 'I'm a fan of flat lids: they provide a place to rest your spoon while you're cooking.' >

FROM TOP Premium Plus 18cm **titanium non-stick saucepan**, £54.50, SKK; 18cm **copper saucepan**, £194, Mauviel; both Divertimenti. 20cm **cast-iron saucepan** in Cerise, £90, Le Creuset. 3qt **stainless-steel saucepan** and lid, £224.95, All-Clad; 26cm **walnut pan**, £277, La Cornue; both Divertimenti.

Stainless steel

These long-lasting pans come in smart, unfussy styles that wouldn't look out of place in a chef's kitchen. They are made from iron combined with other metals, typically chromium and nickel. Saucepans are graded according to the mix of metals, and a good-quality pan will be referred to as 18/10 gauge, meaning it has 18 per cent chromium and 10 per cent nickel. Many pans have an aluminium core sandwiched between two stainless-steel layers (called tri-ply) or have aluminium or copper added to the base to help distribute the heat.



Tri-ply stainless-steel cookware, from £25 for a 14cm saucepan (lid sold separately), Marks & Spencer.



Aluminium

For a cheaper option that works as an excellent conductor of heat, cast aluminium pans tick both boxes. Pans are often coated in a layer of coloured enamel and most have non-stick linings to make them easy to clean. Hard-anodised aluminium cookware, originally developed in the US for the restaurant trade, is made from chemically treated aluminium. This makes the surface extremely hard-wearing and twice as strong as stainless steel. Aluminium cookware isn't suitable for use on an induction hob unless it has been bonded with a ferrous metal base such as titanium.

Three-piece hard-anodised aluminium saucepan set, £150, Sebastian Conran for John Lewis.

Saucepans at a glance

If you want...	Average cost	Suitable for all hob types
Stainless steel	£10-£150	Y
Aluminium	£5-£45	N*
Hard-anodised aluminium	£20-£65	N*
Cast iron	£40-£90	Y
Copper	£65-£245	N**