



TEST DRIVE



BEST DESIGN

**Frieling Handle-It
glass-bottom
springform pan (9 inches)**

\$42.95 at cooking.com

The handles on this pan are easy to grasp when pulling a cake from the oven or out of a hot water bath. The pan performed beautifully in all our tests, and its glass base—scratch-proof, dishwasher-safe, and suited for serving—only boosts its appeal. Sold as a 9-inch pan, it's actually about ½ inch larger, so watch baking times when following a recipe that calls for a 9-inch pan (cakes baked slightly faster, and baked goods did not achieve the same height). The nonstick coating isn't scratch-resistant, so handle and store accordingly.



Springform Pans

This two-piece baking pan is essential to any well-stocked kitchen. Here are our top picks.

BY MARYELLEN DRISCOLL

How we tested

We evaluated ten 9-inch springform pans by baking a plain cheesecake, a pineapple crumb cake, and a quiche in each. We evaluated the pans for even baking, successful ring release and transfer from the base, overall construction, and ease of cleaning. We opened and closed the clasp on each pan 50 times consecutively to test how well it maintained tension after extensive use, and immersed the pans in a hot water bath and poured water into them to test for leaking.

A SPRINGFORM PAN IS A MUST-HAVE for bakers. It consists of two removable parts: a metal ring that forms the sides of the pan, and a base that the ring fits into. To assemble the pan for baking, set the ring into the grooved edges of the base and close the ring's clasp to tighten the sides. Once the contents of the pan are baked and cooled, you can open the clasp to remove the ring, leaving the cake intact on its base.

A springform pan's removable sides come in handy when making delicate cakes and baked goods that can't be easily moved from baking pan to cooling rack to serving plate, such as cheesecakes (see page 62), tortes, crumb cakes, mousse cakes, and quiches. But of the many springform pans on the market, which should you buy? We've done the research (well, baking) for you, and here are our favorites.



PROFESSIONAL
GRADE

Kaiser La Forme Plus springform pan (9 inches)

\$46 at kaiserbakeware.com

Made of heavy-gauge steel, this pan has an environmentally friendly two-layer, highly scratch-resistant ceramic nonstick coating. The ring settles into a groove that extends around the pan's base, so it's easy to put the pan together. The groove also acts like a trench, helping to prevent leaks from dripping onto your oven's floor. Left-handed users will love that the ring flips so it can be opened or closed from either direction. And finally, the nonstick base is flat all the way across, which allows for excellent release and easy transfer from the base to a serving plate. The pan's dark gray color means it browns baked goods deeply, so watch baking times carefully.



BEST BUY

Wilton Avanti Everglide nonstick springform pan with glass bottom (9 inches)

\$21.49 at wilton.com/store

This is an ideal starter springform pan—good quality and affordable. Like the Frieling, it has a flat glass base that doubles as a serving plate. The heavy-duty ring has a scratch-resistant nonstick coating for clean release and the construction is sturdy. This pan baked evenly and is very easy to clean.

What to look for

Keep these things in mind when shopping for a springform pan:

Construction

A heavy-duty pan will bake evenly, won't warp, and will be less prone to dents, which can affect the ring's seal.

Resilient clasp

Like a buckle, the clasp on a springform pan closes to seal the ring tightly on the base and opens to stretch the ring wider than the cake it just baked. The best pans have clasps that function smoothly, with just the right amount of tension, and hold up after extended use.

Design

Choose a pan with a flat base (without raised edges) so you can easily transfer your cake or quiche from the base to a serving plate.

Nonstick coating

This is essential for easy clean up and—more important—to help the ring release well.

Spring a leak

Not one pan we tested was truly leak-proof. After all, the base and ring are two separate pieces. We recommend setting a rimmed baking sheet on a rack under the springform pan to keep your oven clean in case of leaks. If you're baking in a water bath, wrap the outside of the pan in two layers of foil.

Maryellen Driscoll is a Fine Cooking contributing editor.