Different Types of Thermometers

No kitchen is complete without one essential little piece of equipment: a thermometer. You need different types of cooking thermometers to test temperatures when you are making candy, baking bread, grilling meat, or even just storing food in your refrigerator. But are all thermometers the same? And how can you choose the best one for your kitchen? Our guide will help you find the best thermometer for your application.

Digital Thermometers

Digital food thermometers feature a digital screen that is very easy to read at a distance and in low light. They're also known for their quick response time which makes them useful for checking temperatures for food safety. Here are the most common types of digital thermometers you'll need in a commercial kitchen:

Thermistor / Digital Instant Read Thermometers

You'll see these thermometers referred to as thermistors or instant read probes. They're very popular and can be used to take quick measurements of internal temperatures on cooked foods. Many are sized to be carried in a pocket or apron which makes them convenient and accessible.
Thermocouples have a larger range and faster response time than a thermistor. Many include interchangeable probes that can be used on various hot or cold foods. The response time will vary depending on the type of probe.

Features: Fastest response time, wide temperature range, interchangeable probes
Best used for: Cooked or frozen meat, hot and cold food holding, liquids, receiving

Infrared thermometers are unique because they take the temperature of surfaces without coming into contact with the food. They use infrared light to give an instant reading and because there is no probe, they don't need to be cleaned in between uses. This makes them very convenient for doing quick checks on a buffet or holding line.

Features: No contact or risk of contamination, quick read time
Best used for: Food holding, receiving

Oven Probe Thermometers
These thermometers feature a leave-in probe that can be inserted into large cuts of meat during cooking. A remote display monitors the temperature and alerts the operator when a certain temperature is reached.

**Features:** Prevents overcooking or undercooking of meat, remote display

**Best used for:** Meat

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Dial Thermometers

Dial thermometers feature a round analog dial with a circular scale and a pointer that indicates temperature. While these types of thermometers are not as easy to read as a digital thermometer, they are easy to calibrate and don't require batteries for operation. These aspects make dial thermometers dependable and easy to use. Continue reading to learn about the different types of dial thermometers:

**Instant Read Dial Thermometers**

You'll also see these thermometers referred to as bimetal probe thermometers. They're the dial equivalent to digital instant read thermometers and work for the same applications, like taking internal temperatures.

**Features:** Quick readout time, accuracy, convenient size

**Best used for:** Meat, food holding, baking

**Oven Thermometers**
Dial thermometers have the advantage of being able to handle very hot ambient temperatures. Oven thermometers are designed to be placed inside your oven where they can give you a reading on the actual temperature inside the cabinet. This is much more accurate than relying on your oven temperature controls.

**Features:** Heat resistant, high temperature range  
**Best used for:** Ovens, grilling

## Frothing Thermometers

Frothing thermometers are designed to give readings on hot milk or other beverages, making them the best thermometer for liquids in most cases. They feature a clip that fastens to a frothing pitcher and an extra-long probe for reaching inside. Baristas use frothing thermometers to make sure that hot milk is at the perfect temperature for drinks like lattes and cappuccinos.

**Features:** Clips to a pitcher, long probe, prevents scalding  
**Best used for:** Milk, hot beverages

## Floating Thermometers

These thermometers can be placed directly into your stock pot of soup thanks to a floating design. This is also a good style of thermometer for water that needs to be heated to precise temperatures. The dial floats on the surface and displays the reading while the probe senses the temperature below.

**Features:** Floats in liquids, no pan clip needed  
**Best used for:** Soups, stocks, sauces

### Other Kitchen Thermometers

Here are some of the other common thermometers you might need in your commercial kitchen:

**Deep Fry / Candy Making Thermometers**

While making candies like fudge, caramel, or toffee, it's imperative to monitor the temperature of your ingredients to ensure they don't get too hot. Likewise, fryer oil should be kept at a consistent temperature to get the best results. These thermometers are designed to handle the very high temperatures that are required when you use hot oil or boil sugar.

**Features:** High temperature range, heat resistant  
**Best used for:** Making candy, frying

**Wall Thermometers**

Wall thermometers come in handy when you want to monitor ambient temperatures in your kitchen, wine cellar, food truck, or outdoor patio. They come in dial or digital designs and can be mounted to the wall for easy visibility.
You can ensure that your refrigerated or frozen foods are kept at the safe storage temperature with a refrigerator thermometer. These thermometers come in dial or digital styles and are designed to be placed inside your refrigeration unit.

**Features:** Resistant to moisture, handles low temperatures

**Best used for:** Refrigerators, freezers, cold holding

**Refrigerator Thermometers**

Disposable thermometers are ideal for use while cooking or grilling meats. They are inserted into the meat before cooking and indicate when the appropriate temperature is reached by changing color. Because they are made for one-time use, there's no risk of contamination.

**Features:** Disposable

**Best used for:** Meat

**Disposable Thermometers**

Dishwasher Thermometers

These thermometers are used to check the temperature of your dishwasher to ensure that it's hot enough to sanitize your dishes. Dishwasher thermometers come in different styles, including disposable and probe designs.

**Features:** Waterproof, disposable, heat-resistant

**Best used for:** Dishwasher

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**Why Do You Need a Food Thermometer?**

![Temperature Zone]

Food thermometers are vital instruments to keep on hand in a commercial kitchen. You'll need to check the temperature of food shipments, prepared foods, stored foods, appliances, and even the ambient air in your hot kitchen.

**Food Safety** - Since improper handling is a major cause of food-borne illnesses, use a thermometer to ensure proper **food safety** and make sure foods stay out of the **temperature danger zone**.

**Food Preparation** - Precise temperature control is very important in certain types of food preparation. Relying on food’s color, texture, or timing can be misleading. Using the proper thermometer ensures consistency and quality.

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**Features of Thermometers**

Kitchen thermometers are designed for a variety of applications and some features are best-suited for certain tasks. When you’re choosing a food thermometer, keep these things in mind:

**Read Time** - Also referred to as response time, this is the amount of time it takes for the thermometer to give an accurate reading. For busy chefs, a fast response can be
The only way to accurately read the temperature of your foods and appliances is with a thermometer. Now that you have an understanding of the different types of food thermometers available, you can choose the best one for your application.

**Accuracy** - When it comes to ensuring foods are out of the food safety danger zone, accuracy can be very important. It's crucial when preparing items like steaks that need to be cooked to exact temperatures. Candy making also requires a high level of accuracy.

**Temperature Range** - The temperature range of a thermometer determines whether it can be used for hot applications, cold applications, or both.

**Read Out Type** - Kitchen thermometers either come with digital or dial read outs.
Digital screens are easy to read and these thermometers often have other features, like alarms to alert you when a certain temperature has been reached. Dial thermometers have an analog dial that may be more difficult to read at a distance, but these thermometers are easy to calibrate and don't require batteries. They also work better in extreme ambient temperatures, like you'd find in a freezer or oven.