

parts are sturdy, dishwasher safe, and—miracle of miracles—they all stack together for convenient storage even though they are all the same diameter. NOTE: Each piece of the multipot is sold separately.

An idealist is one who,  
on noticing that  
a rose smells better  
than a cabbage,  
concludes that it will also  
make better soup.

—H. L. MENCKEN

#### 9.82 THERMOS HOT POT



This is not exactly a stockpot, but we thought we'd show it to you anyway. If you're going out of the house and have no time to watch the stockpot,

or if you are going to a football game or other outdoor event, or if you're simply bringing some food to someone else, this item may come in handy. You boil the ingredients in the stainless steel inner pot, then transfer the pan to the thermos and lock the lid. Several hours later the food is fully cooked and still very hot. We made vegetable stock inside it—it doesn't require the same time or finesse as meat stock—and after five hours we had flavorful broth holding at 160°F. Use it for soups, vegetable or fish stocks, baked beans, or hot cider. Tote it anywhere. It holds 4.5 liters (4½ quarts).

## STEAMERS & STEAMING BASKETS

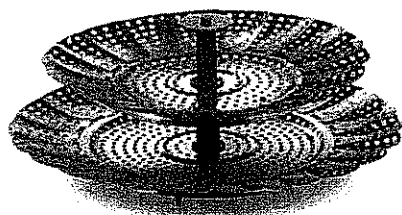
STEAMING IS THE BEST WAY to keep vegetables crisp, brightly colored, and crunchy. What's more, the vegetables taste delicious, with real, earthy flavor, sometimes delicate, sometimes intense, but never bitter. Vegetables—particularly green and yellow ones, which are filled with water-soluble vitamins—retain more nutrients when they are steamed, so they taste good and are good for you. Americans tend to limit steaming to vegetables, but other cultures steam a variety of foods. Many dishes that benefit from moist-heat cooking will do well in a steamer: fish, chicken, shellfish, couscous, and rice among them.

Steamers may be self-contained pieces of cookware or separate pieces—either solid inserts or collapsible baskets—that fit inside cookware. In either case, to

function properly, a steamer must have a tight-fitting lid, so vapors build up within the vessel to sufficiently cook the food. But there must also be a means for steam to escape when necessary, so that too much pressure will not be created inside the pot. For optimum steaming, the pot should be deep and wide, so steam can circulate freely around the ingredients.

Any pot can serve as a steamer base; even a large wok will do. As for the insert or basket, stainless steel is the top choice because there is no interaction with the food, it doesn't rust, and it is durable. Bamboo steamers are fine as well. Be careful when lifting the lids after steaming foods. Open the lid at a safe distance and tip it away from your face to avoid the hot steam from burning you.

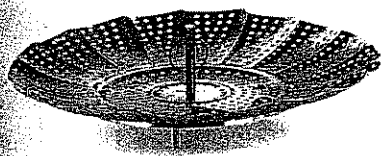
#### 9.83 NORPRO DOUBLE STEAMER BASKET



This steaming basket has several virtues. It is made of stainless steel, which is durable, never rusts, and cleans easily; the overlapping petals unfold and expand for filling and collapse for convenient storage. In addition, it is two-tiered, to give you more than double the steaming capability. The two baskets can be used separately: they each have three legs to hold the foods to be steamed

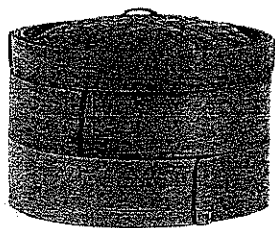
above the water. One fits inside a 6¼" or larger pot, the other into a 7¼" or larger pot. They also may be stacked—there is a plastic insert in the center to lock the two baskets together—so you can cook two different vegetables or clams on one layer, vegetables on the other, and so on. The center post is plastic and doesn't get hot, making it easy to lift this basket out of the steaming pot.

### 9.84 ENDURANCE STEAMER BASKET



Put this basket inside a saucepan and you have an inexpensive steamer. Its eighteen perforated stainless steel leaves expand or close to fit into 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ " or larger pots, and to hold a small or larger quantity of ingredients. The basket rests on three legs that raise the contents above the water. The leaves never rust, and they fold back into a "bud" for convenient storage. The metal post in the center can be removed to accommodate large vegetables, such as corn on the cob or a whole cauliflower. There is a ring on the center post to lift the basket from the pot. It will be hot inside, so be sure to be careful and to use a pot holder. Steam contains more heat energy, and has the potential to burn you more severely, than boiling water.

### 9.85 JOYCE CHEN TIERED BAMBOO STEAMERS



Bamboo steamers are typically used for cooking Chinese dim sum, but they have many virtues that make them handy for all types of food. They are especially good for dim sum because of their gently domed lids, which trap steam inside. Bamboo absorbs moisture, so condensed water droplets never fall on the doughy tidbits, which would make

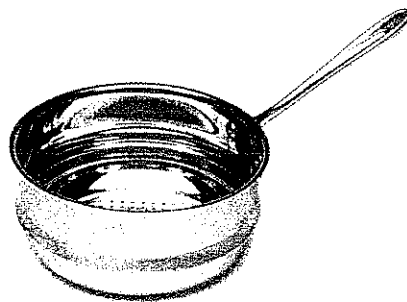
## CONSTRUCTING A MAKESHIFT STEAMER

✿ HELEN CHEN ✿

If you don't have a Chinese steamer, you can create a makeshift steamer using a wok, stir-fry pan, or large stockpot. (Many wok sets come with steaming racks.) Be sure the pan is large enough to hold the dish used for steaming. It must have at least 2" of headroom and enough room around it so that it can be easily removed when hot. Remove the top and bottom of an empty tuna fish can to make a stand and place it on the bottom of your pan. Bring water to a boil. Put the plate or bowl containing the food on the stand, cover the wok with a lid, and steam.

them soggy. The bamboo also adds a delicate fragrance to ingredients. To keep the bamboo clean and prevent rancidity, food is never placed directly on the slats inside the basket. The slats are lined with cabbage leaves, parchment paper, or a small plate with a lip to trap juices. These steamers are usually used inside a wok (be sure the wok is about 2" wider than the basket) and can be stacked to accommodate different foods in each basket. The set we show you has two baskets, but you can add more. Caution: foods can stick to the steamer.

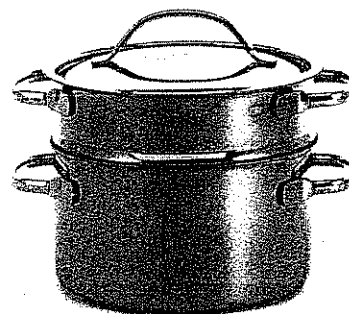
### 9.86 ALL-CLAD STEAMER INSERT



Here is another easy way to transform your pots to steamers: a special accessory insert that fits snugly into the pan. This 3-quart model is made of thick, sturdy, heavy stainless steel. The basket is capacious, with room for two bunches of broccoli or a couple pounds of steamer clams. It has small holes on the bottom to allow

steam to penetrate the food, and it has an outward bulge near the center so it can sit on the rim of the bottom pot, high above the water. The top of the basket has a curved edge, where the lid rests. The long handle stays cool and is riveted to the basket. The length of the handle is particularly convenient for steam cooking. It keeps your hands away from the hot vapors and lets you lift and carry the entire basket to the sink for draining. This insert fits all of All-Clad's 3-, 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ -, and 4-quart saucepans. The company also makes a 12-quart steamer insert, with two side loop handles, to fit larger saucepans.

### 9.87 CUISINART EVERYDAY STAINLESS STEEL STEAMER



This compact pair of pots have merit, particularly for those with small kitchens. The bottom unit is a 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ -quart high-quality stainless steel pan. A covered copper disc enhances heating, so you can use it for a number of things: making sauce, poaching