

# A Good Juicer is Hard to Find

*But well worth the effort.*

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If you're looking for a better absorption rate and return on your health maintenance dollar, you might consider setting aside the vitamin and mineral supplements and investing in a good juicer.

(If you are taking supplements per instructions from a qualified health care provider, you should, of course, disregard that last sentence.)

The concentrated nutrition extracted by juicing equipment can give you a noticeable boost and greater stamina quickly, and your digestive system will probably love you.

Another perk of juicing: If you're prone to low blood sugar anxiety or headaches as a result of a delayed meal, drinking a little juice will furnish your bloodstream almost instantly with the vital nutrients it needs.

Raw vegetable juices, when drunk in small quantities with meals, are a fast and efficient means of ingesting essential enzymes, minerals and vitamins which can be depleted in the course of an illness. Spinach, parsley and dandelion leaf form a good juice combination for restoring B-complex and iron, while beets and carrots provide Vitamin C.

Needless to say, a stronger constitution will stabilize the digestive system,

Of course, the process of generating this liquid gold requires a commitment of time and energy to wash vegetables, clip carrot tops, skin beets, peel oranges and chop the raw material into manageable chunks that fit the hopper. There's set-up time, actual juicing time, and not unsubstantial clean-up time involved here. But such labor in the pursuit of enhancing your physiognomy should be grouped with other rituals of domestic life that are grounding and reaffirm the soul. Besides, once you get the process down to a science you'll hardly notice it's work at all.

One way to cut down on chore time is to buy your juice already squeezed or masticated at a health food store or juice stand. (Unfortunately, many of these companies don't use organic vegetables, which sort of defeats the purpose.) Another approach is pick up a couple of quart mason jars and do all your juicing for the week shot.

On the other hand, Some people prefer a smaller, inexpensive juicer that fits on the kitchen counter and use it to knock out one glass of juice a day without too much hassle. The juice is fresher and has less chance to oxidize.

One of the perks of owning your own juicer is that you can also use it to create nut butters, baby food, pasta noodles and sauces.

Needless to say, you shouldn't

spend a lot of money on equipment until you've decided what you plan to do with it. For example, what type of vegetables or fruits do you want to drink? Some juicers are best for hard produce like carrots and beets, but recoil at the introduction of green leafy produce into their chambers.

Some juicers only handle wheat grass. If you only plan to drink orange and grapefruit juice with an occasional strawberry or blueberry thrown in, then you might choose an inexpensive fruit juicer.

Juicers range in price from \$25 for the citrus squeezers to \$400 for a high-end masticating, commercial-strength juicer. Other factors to consider are the width of the chute (which determines the amount of chopping beforehand), the type of cutting method (centrifugal or masticating), and the length of the warranty on the equipment.

Just about all juicers on the market have their pros and cons, so your choice should also depend in part on the amount of money you want to spend, how often you plan to juice, and the ease of use inherent in each model.

There's also the question of whether to buy online or at a retail store. While the internet warehouses offer discounted prices, you have to take into consideration the shipping charge (if any) and the restocking fee (up to 15% of the price) if you change your mind. Add to that the shipping cost to return the item, and you may decide it makes more sense to visit your local retailer.

Unfortunately, not a lot of stores in San Francisco sell the larger juicers reviewed below. We called around and discovered that Rainbow Grocery sells the

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Champion juicer, and two models of Omega, but not the one we reviewed.

There's also Dvorson's Food Service Equipment, located in Sausalito. Their prices are similar to the online discounters, probably because they are one themselves. You can get more information at [www.dvorsons.com](http://www.dvorsons.com).

(By some coincidence, this company formerly occupied the building on Mission Street where The City Edition is now housed).

So here's the skinny on a few of the top juicers on the market:

## Omega 8003/8005

Omega offers both centrifugal and masticating juicers in several models. The less expensive centrifugal Omega 4000 has a chute that reviewers found to be too small, requiring you to chop produce into small pieces, which adds more time to an already time-consuming chore.

Not to worry, the Omega 8003/8005 juicer is another story entirely. This is a masticating juicer, which means it can grind, homogenize or liquify a wide variety of foods in addition to produce. Baby foods, pates, sauces, nut butters, banana ice creams and fruit sorbets, even pasta noodles can be extruded without incident from this puppy.

Another major advantage of this product is the quality of the extraction. Masticating juicers have motors that turn a lot slower than centrifugal juicers. The Omega operates at a remarkably low 80 RPM, which means less heat, more thorough extraction and therefore higher nutritional value and longer shelf life than other models. The chute is two inches in diameter, which means you don't have to chop much at

all! The only difference, by the way, between the 8003 and 8005 is that the latter has stain-resistant chrome, as compared to white plastic on the former.

The Omega juicer knocks off green leafy vegetables much easier than the Champion (see below). Probably for that reason and the others we explain below, this juicer is the best choice among experts and the many customers who own one.

All of the machine parts except for the cutter are warranted for ten years and set-up of the machine is a snap. Prices range from \$260 to \$399, depending where you shop.

## Champion 2000+

Champion juicers are manufactured by a company called Plastaket, based in Lodi, California and have been on the market for decades, and most health food stores stock Champion juicers as a matter of course. The latest model on the shelves is the Champion 2000+ juicer, offered in home or commercial strength.

The latter type is constructed with a stainless steel internal chamber, although the shaft that and cuts inside it is plastic, and cuts with tiny jigsaw blades. The home model has more plastic parts and a little less power. In both cases, the shaft spins at a reasonably low 1425 rpm. The width of the chute is an inch and three-quarters, which is generous enough, and like the Omega 8005, the Champion is a masticating juicer.

"As more value is extracted from a vegetable, more pigments (color) are also extracted," according to Harvest Essentials, which sells Champions (and other juicers) online. "This is why Champion-prepared juice is darker and richer in color when compared to

that of a conventional centrifugal-type juicer."

The juicer can also make coconut milk, baby foods, fruit sauces, nut butters, ice creams, and sherbets.

Sadly, the Champion has a difficult time with spinach and other leafy vegetables. It also heats up the juice a bit when the cutter gets hot, which is often, and that subtracts from the nutritional value and shelf life. To get around this problem, you can stop once or twice during a long juicing session, pull the cutter out, and rinse off the accumulated pulp in cold water. (This only takes a minute.)

Also, when juicing spinach or other leafy vegetables, it helps to push a carrot chunk down the chute after every couple of handfuls of green stuff. This helps unclog the cutter and the chute. It's also important to keep the metal cylindrical shaft on the motor lubricated with olive oil.

If you're planning to mainly juice carrots, beets, celery and parsley, the Champion should be fine and is cheaper than the other equipment of its class.

One other cautionary note. The instruction booklet leaves out a few important details about assembly. For that reason, it's a good idea to check this machine out thoroughly at a retail store and maybe even ask a clerk to show you how to assemble it before making the purchase. It's not rocket science but there's a metal screen that's difficult to insert.

When you open the box, it should already be assembled on the body/chute, so you can slip the whole unit over the cutter and be ready to go. After your first juicing, pay attention to how the parts disassemble and reattach the filter to the body right after

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you wash both parts. Otherwise the screen may bend a little out of shape, making it hard to reattach later.

Depending on where you shop, and whether you choose the home or commercial version of the 2000+, prices range from \$199 to \$350. In either case, the warranty on the heavy duty General Electric motor is ten years.

## Green Star 3000

One of the highest priced products on the market, the Green Star is also a masticating juicer, but has a two-gear press, which makes it ideal for green leafy vegetables, as well as carrots and other fibrous veggies. It requires a little more elbow grease, however, to press the material into the cutter, and fruits don't cut quite as well as the veggies. There are attachments to use for different purposes, including fruit juices, which make the process go more smoothly.

Consumerresearch.com claims the Green Star 3000 is the preferred choice of natural health aficionados. The gears turn at a slow RPM, which means higher nutritional content. The machine also juices wheatgrass, something the two models listed above can't do.

The Green Star costs about \$400.

## Breville 800JEXL

On Amazon.com, the Breville Juice Fountain Elite 800JEXL gets raves from many of its owners who have submitted comments. The Australian consumer magazine Choice has rated the product number one in performance.

The Breville is a high-end centrifugal-ejection juicer with two speeds, a whopping three-inch wide chute and sturdy stainless

steel construction. The 1000 watt motor comes with a three year warranty and its parts are dishwasher safe.

Breville also offers a cheaper 850 watt machine called the Fountain Plus JE95XL. This juicer comes with plastic parts, a one-year warranty, and, according to consumerresearch.com, some reported incidences of motor failure.

Centrifugal juicers function by spinning the vegetables around in a metal dish at high RPM's, causing the juice to spill out through the screen at the bottom. Most stores sell more of this type of juicer than the masticating extractors because it's generally cheaper and looks nice on the counter.

As stated above, however, centrifugal juicers turn at significantly higher RPM's than the masticating type, so that you lose some nutritional value and shelf life in the process, and you don't get as dry a pulp (translate: less juice).

## L'Equip 110.5

If you're on a budget and want something that takes up less space on the counter, consider the L'Equip centrifugal juicer. Its model 110.5 comes with a 600 watt motor and a warranty of six years. On the down side, it's a better machine for softer fruits than harder vegetables like carrots and beets, and the chute is much smaller than the models listed above. If you plan to do a lot of carrot juicing, it's better to sacrifice another hundred dollars on a better machine than hassle repeatedly with the cheaper equipment.

The L'Equip 110.5 costs about \$100. A centrifugal juicer that is similar to it, the Juiceman II, also falls in the \$100 neighborhood.

For more info and juicer reviews, check the following websites: Consumerresearch.com, Buyjuicers.com, Eatveg.com, Juicing.com

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