

HOME STYLE

KITCHEN SCALES

Words: **CLARE GOGERTY**

Y our first kitchen scales purchase is a rite of passage, marking the transition from slap-it-all-in-and-see-how-it-turns-out cooking to actually following a recipe. Suddenly a world of accuracy looms. Whereas measurements stated in tablespoons and cups can be fudged with existing homeware, you can't dodge grams and millilitres – these are units that need to be weighed. You can get away with guessing amounts by eye if you are a Michelin-starred chef but probably not if you're rustling up your first Yorkshire pudding.

This is especially true, of course, when it comes to baking. Many a sponge has collapsed due to slapdash measuring, and many a loaf lain heavily in the tin, the result of casual dispensing. The moment that you realise that the process of adding carefully weighed ingredients into a bowl is not a chore but an essential and satisfying part of transforming flour, sugar and butter into a toothsome, beautifully risen delight, is a culinary coming of age.

Man has always strived to measure



Irene Handl, never far from a mechanical scale

things, of course: the first mass-market instrument to do this was the balance scale. Consisting of a pivoted horizontal lever with arms of equal length with a weighing pan suspended from each, these are the scales associated with justice and the astrological star sign Libra. They make an excellent symbol for fair play but are not so good when it comes to quantifying self-raising flour.

Better is the mechanical scale. This has a spring which moves the hands of a dial to reveal the weight of the ingredients in the dish above. Requiring no batteries and being easy to read, mechanical scales have endured for decades and are pleasingly retro in style. Accuracy can be forfeited, however, especially when measuring smaller quantities.

Which brings us to digital scales, probably the most useful of all. Able to switch swiftly between grams and ounces, weigh both dry and wet ingredients, no matter how small, and with easy-to-read LCD displays, they are the chosen device of chefs and anyone else with a grown-up approach to cooking. **S**

“Many a sponge has collapsed due to slapdash measuring”

THE UPDATE



THE CLASSIC

Mechanical kitchen scale | £20
A simple mechanism, an easy-to-read dial and no need for batteries.
johnlewis.com



Heston Precision flat digital kitchen scale | £29.99
Weighs tiny (1g) to big (5kg).
lakeland.co.uk

TWO GREAT TWISTS



Digital kitchen scale | £25.99
In brushed steel with a generous bowl that upends to store.
lakeland.co.uk