Silicone Cooking: New Options to Reduce Fat and Waste  
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While many home chefs have embraced this newest line of bake ware products, some of us have been reluctant to depart from our traditional metal and glass baking pans that have stood the test of time. As more and more uses are being discovered for silicone in the kitchen, more of these items are marked as clearance in stores.

Their bright colors do attract our attention. Their ability to flex in order to release a baked product and store more compactly are interesting. Yet the baking pans seem unwieldy, even flimsy. Some manufacturers have designed companion racks or ‘sleds’ that provide much needed stability especially for the larger “pans.”

If you are interested, you might start small. Use the spatulas. When compared to the usual rubber, they do not melt and there is no more trimming the worn edges. They double even as a spatula to stir things like scrambled eggs. Even after extended use they still look good!

Silicone is made of FDA-approved food grade silicone and this should be clear on the packaging. Each piece of silicone has its own limitation as to maximum temperature but in general it is just over 400 degrees. Read and follow the label instructions!

Benefits of silicone bakeware are:
No greasing or oiling of pans required.
Pans heat quickly and bake evenly with no burnt or dark edges or bottom.
Removal from pans is super easy—a slight twist or gently pulling on the sides.
They are freezer, refrigerator, microwave, dishwasher and oven safe.
Bake, store, freeze and reheat right in the pans.
No rusting or staining
No need to alter your batter or temperature – bake as usual
Clean up is a breeze
Lightweight and perfect for a camper or RV
Storing is easy – no special attention is required and they retain their shape.

To bake successfully:

Follow the recipe for heating instructions, but do not the manufacturer’s maximums.
Pans are hot to touch while in oven; but cool down quickly; use hot pads!
Always use a metal cookie sheet, specially designed “sled” or rack underneath larger “pans.”
Wash and rinse silicone products thoroughly before first use.
Warranties tend to vary with bakeware brands.
Do not use knives or sharp objects, they could damage the silicone!
Never use on an open flame or on stovetop burners. Steamer(s) can be used in stovetop pans.
Types of products: Ice cube trays for parties; pans for gelled salads, steamers, spatulas and scrapers, steamers, poaching cups, muffin, cake and loaf pans, whisks and coating for whisks, decorating pens, baking sheets, pastry mats, casserolese, baking sheets, prep bowls, and bands to wrap around meat or pastries.