



Here's what you should know about Commercial Toasters before you buy:

Available in designs suitable for placement in both the front and back of the house, commercial toasters come in a variety of styles and configurations to accommodate different toasting needs.

The first determination to make when shopping for a commercial toaster is volume, because toasting volume will dictate which type of toaster is best. While rated for up to 400 slices per hour, most pop-up toasters are suitable for operations that toast up to about 200 pieces per hour. Anything more than that is best served by a conveyor toaster. Conveyor toasters can accommodate higher volume toasting needs because they typically can be set to produce consistent toasting results regardless of conveyor speed.

Also consider what you'll be toasting. Conveyor toasters, while quick and efficient, sometimes are limited by the conveyor opening. A short conveyor opening often restricts a toaster's use for thick items like Texas Toast, muffins or other pastries. The same can be said of pop-up toasters, although many of them have wide slots to accommodate bagels and other larger fare. Niche models are available for use with buns and other baked goods.

Most commercial toasters are constructed of stainless steel with aluminum or aluminized steel components. Chrome-plated steel models offer a mirrored finish, making them great for use in the front of the house for buffet-type setups. Radiant heat is the dominant heat source, but convection is emerging as a supplemental source in some higher-end models. Many offer cool-touch exteriors for operator safety.

Some commercial toasters are equipped with power saver modes for energy efficiency; individually-controlled heating elements also help use less energy while offering additional toasting control for single- or double-sided toasting. Both conveyor toasters and pop-up toasters should have removable crumb trays to facilitate cleaning. Some conveyor toasters include removable wire feed racks for cleaning.

Most commercial toasters are NSF- certified, and many are and ETL-certified, UL-listed or have the CE marking. Voltages range from 120 to 240.

Brands: Adcraft; APW Wyott; Belleco; Counterveyor; Equipex; Globe; Gold Medal; Hamilton Beach; Hatco; Holman; Proctor Silex; Roundup; Waring; West Bend

Type: Conveyor; Pop-up

Conveyor toasters are best suited for high-volume applications, as they can handle toasting large quantities. Some models will toast upwards of 2,000 pieces per hour. Available in horizontal and vertical configurations to accommodate use in small spaces, the conveyors vary in width; average conveyor width is about 12 inches. Conveyor openings typically measure from 1 to 3 inches high, so ensure toasting product will fit. Some conveyor toasters have variable-speed conveyors, which accommodate toasting on demand.

Pop-up toasters usually offer two or four slots for toasting, some with wide slots to accommodate thick products like bagels or Texas Toast. High-lift levers boost finished toast out of the slots to help prevent burned fingers, and some pop-up toasters have long slots for toasting French or Italian breads. Bread-centering slots are sometimes included to keep slices aligned for even toasting.

Both conveyor toasters and pop-up toasters provide some kind of darkness control to prevent under- or over-toasting.

Capacity: Ranges from 280 to almost 500 slices per hour for pop-ups; Conveyors up to 1,800 slices per hour.

Conveyor toasters are the best choice for restaurants and high-volume cafeterias, where the kitchen is toasting more than 500 pieces per hour. Pop-up toasters usually can accommodate up to 500 slices per hour with ease, making them suitable for convenience stores, small cafeterias and other similar venues.