

**RATINGS**

GOOD: ★★★

FAIR: ★★

POOR: ★

# RATING SMALL NONSTICK SAUCEPANS

We tested nine small nonstick saucepans (2-quart capacity, or as close as we could come in a given line) and evaluated them according to the criteria listed below. When manufacturers offered more than one saucepan that satisfied our rubric, we chose a competitively priced or best-selling model. Tests were performed over gas burners on the same range in our test kitchen. The pans are listed in order of preference.

**PRICE:** Prices paid in Boston-area stores, national mail-order catalogs, or online stores.

**MATERIALS:** Materials from which the pan is made.

**WEIGHT:** As measured in the test kitchen, without the lid.

**DESIGN:** We scalded half-and-half in each pan and then made pastry cream, which gave us a chance to evaluate handle comfort and heating qualities, the ease with which a whisk can be maneuvered in the pan, and whether the lip of the pan could aid in pouring liquid neatly, without spills or dribbles. Transparent lids that allowed us a view inside the pan were preferred, as were solidly attached handles.

**PERFORMANCE:** In addition to the pastry cream, we prepared long-grain white rice, which we expected to be evenly cooked with no hint of browning on the bottom, and eggs, which we expected to be moderately and evenly browned. In both cases, we expected the pan to release the food easily. Scores of good, fair, or poor were assigned for each test, and the aggregate score determined the overall performance rating. As a tiebreaker, we prepared caramel in each pan, left it to harden overnight, and then tried to remove the caramel without boiling water in the pan.

**SAUTÉ SPEED:** We started with a cold pan and sautéed  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chopped onions in 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium heat for 12 minutes. Pans that produced soft, pale gold onions with no burnt edges (indicating a medium to medium-slow sauté pace) were rated good, pans that produced onions that were barely colored and retained significant crunch (indicating a very slow sauté pace) were rated fair, and pans that produced onions that were dark brown, crisp, or burnt at the edges (indicating a fast sauté pace) were rated poor.

**RECOMMENDED**
**OUR FAVORITE**
**Calphalon Contemporary Nonstick Short & Saucy 2½ Quart Shallow Saucepan with Cover**

PRICE: \$29.99

MATERIALS: Anodized aluminum with nonstick interior, tempered glass lid, stainless steel handle



WEIGHT: 2 lb 7 oz  
DESIGN: ★★★  
PERFORMANCE: ★★★  
SAUTÉ SPEED: ★★★

TESTERS' COMMENTS: Heavy, solid, and priced right, this pan is a hybrid—part plain saucepan and part classic saucier—just as the name, shallow shape, and generous diameter suggest. Sauté pace was a little slow, though easy to control, and caramel nearly jumped out of the pan.

**Swiss Diamond 2.2 Quart Covered Saucepan**

PRICE: \$94.99

MATERIALS: Cast aluminum with nonstick interior, vented tempered glass lid, thermal plastic handle



WEIGHT: 1 lb 12 oz  
DESIGN: ★★★  
PERFORMANCE: ★★★  
SAUTÉ SPEED: ★★★

TESTERS' COMMENTS: Onions and eggs browned evenly and slipped out effortlessly, and this pan practically ejected the sticky caramel. But c'mon . . . for almost a hundred bucks, don't we deserve a riveted handle?

**Berndes SignoCast Classic 2-Quart Saucepan**

PRICE: \$69.99

MATERIALS: Cast aluminum with nonstick interior and exterior, tempered glass lid, thermal plastic handle



WEIGHT: 1 lb 13 oz  
DESIGN: ★★★  
PERFORMANCE: ★★★  
SAUTÉ SPEED: ★★★

TESTERS' COMMENTS: Flared sides and rounded corners meant easy whisking, and the nonstick finish performed well in the abuse test. Not cheap, though, and the handle is not riveted.

**RECOMMENDED WITH RESERVATIONS**
**Bialetti Casa Italia Italian Collection 2 Quart Covered Saucepan**

PRICE: \$24.99

MATERIALS: Aluminum with nonstick interior, self-draining tempered glass lid, Santoprene handle



WEIGHT: 1 lb 5 oz  
DESIGN: ★★★  
PERFORMANCE: ★★  
SAUTÉ SPEED: ★★

TESTERS' COMMENTS: This lightweight pan wasn't perfect (the onions overbrowned a bit), but given its low price, design features (rolled lip, pouring spout, glass lid, wide diameter, and stay-cool handle), and excellent performance in the caramel abuse test, we're willing to turn down the heat a little.

**Circulon Total 2 Quart Covered Saucepan**

PRICE: \$40.00

MATERIALS: Anodized aluminum with nonstick interior, stainless steel lid, thermal plastic handle



WEIGHT: 1 lb 12 oz  
DESIGN: ★★  
PERFORMANCE: ★★★  
SAUTÉ SPEED: ★★★

TESTERS' COMMENTS: The stainless steel lid lacked the see-through convenience of glass, a few pieces of onion overbrowned, and the caramel required a soak to come clean. Deal breakers? Maybe not, but with stronger contenders in the lineup, we'd look elsewhere.

**Anolon Advanced 2 Quart Covered Saucepan**

PRICE: \$60.00

MATERIALS: Anodized aluminum with nonstick interior, tempered glass lid, silicone-coated steel handle



WEIGHT: 2 lb  
DESIGN: ★★  
PERFORMANCE: ★★  
SAUTÉ SPEED: ★★★

TESTERS' COMMENTS: Curiously, eggs cooked up a little dark, yet the onions, while impressively even, were on the light side. Run-of-the-mill nonstick performance was fine overall, but lacking in the caramel abuse test.

**Cuisinart Chef's Classic Non-Stick Hard Anodized 2-Quart Saucepan**

PRICE: \$29.99

MATERIALS: Aluminum with anodized aluminum exterior and nonstick interior, tempered glass lid, stainless steel handle



WEIGHT: 1 lb 12 oz  
DESIGN: ★★★  
PERFORMANCE: ★★  
SAUTÉ SPEED: ★

TESTERS' COMMENTS: Well designed, with riveted handle, rounded corners, rolled lip, and clear lid, but hotheaded in the sauté department—the onions came close to burning.

**Revere Convenience 2-Quart Saucepan**

PRICE: \$23.99

MATERIALS: Stainless steel with multi-layer base and nonstick interior, stainless steel and tempered glass lid, thermal plastic handle



WEIGHT: 2 lb  
DESIGN: ★★★  
PERFORMANCE: ★★  
SAUTÉ SPEED: ★★

TESTERS' COMMENTS: Nicely rendered with wide, almost 8-inch diameter, rounded corners, and pouring spouts, but performance didn't match design. Rice did not cook evenly, and onions and eggs were slightly darker than ideal. The caramel clung for dear life and had to be boiled away.

**Look 7-Inch 2.5 Quart Covered Saucepan**

PRICE: \$85.00

MATERIALS: Aluminum with nonstick interior, tempered glass lid, thermal plastic handle



WEIGHT: 2 lb 5 oz  
DESIGN: ★★  
PERFORMANCE: ★★  
SAUTÉ SPEED: ★★

TESTERS' COMMENTS: Handle was loose on delivery, and the lid was so ill-fitting that it flipped upside down on the pan with even the slightest provocation. Very slow sauté pace.