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KITCHEN · UPDATED NOVEMBER 2026

Air fryer planner

How big a basket do two people need? We compared compact air fryers from Ninja, Cosori, Instant and Dash by capacity, footprint and ease of cleaning.

The 10 at a glance

#	Air fryer	Best for	Capacity	Type	Good for
1	Ninja AF101 Air Fryer	Best overall	4 qt	Basket	Two people
2	Cosori Lite 2.1-Quart	Best for small appetites	2.1 qt	Basket	One or two light eaters
3	Ninja Crispi	Best glass	4 qt + 6-cup	Glass container	Cook, serve and store
4	Ninja Pro AF141	Best for bigger portions	5 qt	Basket	Two with leftovers
5	Instant Vortex Plus 4-Quart	Best basket design	4 qt	Basket	Everyday meals
6	Dash Tasti-Crisp 2.6-Quart	Best for small counters	2.6 qt	Basket	Snacks and sides
7	Instant Vortex Mini 2-Quart	Best budget	2 qt	Basket	Tight budgets
8	Chefman Small Compact Air Fryer	Smallest footprint	2 qt	Basket	Tiny kitchens
9	Ninja Crispi Pro	Best for batch cooking	About 6 qt	Glass container	Meal prep for two
10	Dreo ChefMaker	Best smart air fryer	About 6 qt	Smart, with probe	Perfect meat

Quick answers

What size air fryer do two people need?

Usually 3 to 4 quarts. Go for 5 to 6 quarts if you want leftovers or cook larger pieces like chicken thighs.

Is a 2-quart air fryer too small for two?

It's fine for sides and snacks, but mains for two often need two batches.

Are glass air fryers better?

They avoid nonstick coatings and let you see the food, but the glass gets very hot. Nonstick baskets are lighter and easier to handle.

How to choose an air fryer for two

What size do you need?

A rough guide. Portions and meal types vary.

One person	**Two people**	**Two with leftovers**	**Whole chicken**
Sides and snacks	Mains for two	Batch cooking	Any household
2 qt	3 to 4 qt	5 to 6 qt	6 qt+

1 Size it to your meals

Two people usually do best with 3 to 4 quarts. If you like leftovers or cook chicken pieces and fries together, go up to 5 or 6 quarts.

2 Think about a single layer

Food crisps best in one layer. A basket that looks big enough can still mean cooking in two batches if it's narrow, so look at the floor area, not just quarts.

3 Measure your counter

Check the depth and height under your cabinets. Air fryers need space around the vent, so don't push them tight against the wall.

4 Decide on basket or glass

Nonstick baskets are light and easy to clean. Glass models avoid nonstick coatings and double as storage, but they get very hot.

5 Make cleaning easy

Dishwasher-safe baskets and crisper plates save time every day. Fewer parts usually means faster clean-up.

6 Don't pay for presets you won't use

Most people use air fry, roast and reheat. A simple model with good results beats a busy one with lots of buttons.

Your checklist

Tick things off as you go.

BEFORE YOU BUY

- [ ] Count the meals you'll cook each week
- [ ] Measure counter depth and cabinet height
- [ ] Decide on basket or glass
- [ ] Check it's dishwasher-safe

FIRST COOK

- [ ] Wash the basket and plate
- [ ] Run it empty for a few minutes
- [ ] Leave space around the vent
- [ ] Cook in a single layer

GOOD HABITS

- [ ] Shake or flip halfway
- [ ] Don't overfill the basket
- [ ] Use a little oil for crisp results
- [ ] Check food a few minutes early

CLEANING

- [ ] Let it cool first
- [ ] Soak the basket in warm soapy water
- [ ] Avoid metal scourers on nonstick
- [ ] Wipe the heating element when cool

See the full list online

All 10, with pros and cons and who each one suits.

pickwiseguides.com/kitchen/air-fryers-for-two

Open the list

Portion planner and four-dinner test log

Check what fits in one layer, then test four dinners. If you keep cooking in two batches, you need a bigger basket.

PORTION TO BASKET

Food	Portion for two	Fits in one layer?	Batches needed
Fries			
Chicken thighs			
Salmon fillets			
Vegetables			
Other			

FOUR-DINNER TEST

Dinner	Batches	Total time	Result	Clean-up time
Dinner 1				
Dinner 2				
Dinner 3				
Dinner 4				

NOTES