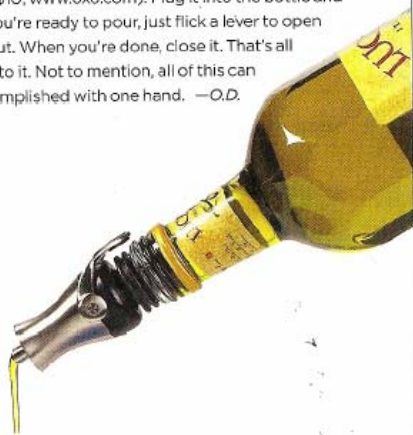


Stop Right There

Olive oil is always on hand in the kitchen these days, which is a good development. Stopping the stuff is less happy.

Jamming a cork in does not work—the little stopper with the spout lets in air and even fruit flies sometimes—and plain old screw caps don't prevent the drips that can make the bottle slick. I've seen many a bottle of oil perched on folded, stained paper towels; my mother-in-law dresses hers in a tennis sock.

OXO has come up with a simple oil stopper that really works (\$10; www.oxo.com). Plug it into the bottle and when you're ready to pour, just flick a lever to open the spout. When you're done, close it. That's all there is to it. Not to mention, all of this can be accomplished with one hand. —O.D.



The Skinny

I like knives. They are easier to clean than food processors, they take up less space, and they're like an extension of the arm, rather than an appliance. I also like mandolines, but the good ones are expensive—and how often do you need a machine to do your julienne for you anyway?

Microplane has created a useful new tool that's like a cross between a knife and a mandoline. The handheld adjustable slicer (\$40; www.microplane.com) can make cuts ranging in thickness from a quarter-inch to paper-thin. The food is cradled in a holder—anyone who's cut his or her hand on a mandoline knows the value of that—and you slide it back and forth across the blade to slice.

Try whisper-thin onions in a salad. Or create a dish of zucchini slivers fanned out on a little olive oil, with some grated Parmigiano over them; bake until the cheese is just taking color. I don't mind chowing, but I do like how different food feels when you go really thin. —O.D.

