My Favorite Appliance

Gone are the days when I would regularly pull out my big food processor, or my massive mixer, or my mondo blender that could mix up 12 cups of liquid in an instant. Even my bread maker is gone. I've kept my food processor and massive mixer but I hardly ever use them anymore. I use a small, powerful hand mixer and my true favorite; my Magic Bullet blender.

Now, this is not meant to be a commercial for the Bullet Blender. There are other brands available. I just happen to love my Bullet. It's the whole concept of a small, portable, easy-to-use, dependable blender that excites me.

Now, let me tell you a Christmas story.

When I was a kid all 7 of us kids would chip in to buy my mother a gift. What did we buy her? Inevitably it was the "Appliance of the Year."

How romantic and thoughtful (sarcasm intended).

I know women today who would kill their husband if he bought an appliance as a Christmas gift. Not a great idea.

And when I think back on it, I'm not sure how my mother felt

about it, but she beamed when she opened that box and we all cheered.

I am one of those women you can buy an appliance for. You might have someone like me in your family and I know you'll be shopping soon. This may be a gift category you've never considered. I'm giving you the green light to consider it.

My Magic Bullet blender is my single, small appliance that I can guarantee gets used every single day. And sometimes 3 or 4 times a day.

Here's how we use it in our household:

1. We make smoothies in ours for breakfast or for a quick lunch. When my husband makes his smoothies, he puts in protein powder and almond milk. Sometimes he uses coconut milk instead of yogurt. Maybe even pea milk. I love that stuff! You can mix it up. I am giving you a smoothie recipe that I particularly love. Lots of people use their little blender to make up green smoothies too. They are all the rage; just not with me.

2. If you are a fan of taking extra fiber, the baby Bullet attachment works great for this. A couple of tablespoons of your favorite fiber supplement, some water and then take it down like a big shot.

3. Dressings. Even if I am cooking a dinner for six to 8, this blender is big enough to do an amazing job on a dressing recipe. My favorite blend is 3 parts oil to one part vinegar and add whatever herbs and spices I want. So I might go 3 parts extra virgin olive oil, one part champagne vinegar and add some tarragon and I have a French dressing for a light salad. A little grated sea salt and pepper and I'm set to whiz my dressing. When it's dinner for 2, it's even more reason to use the teeny blender. In a few seconds you have enough dressing for

two and you've stayed away from processed food in the process.

4. Sauces. This is one of my favorite uses for my Bullet Blender. This hits the mark when I am making a delicate sauce that to drizzle over a piece of freshly roasted fish. The sauce might be something I've made for a roasted chicken or even a steak. Oftentimes the process calls for cooking the ingredients and then blending them. This can be dangerous with any blender (mixing hot ingredients), so be careful. But in most cases I can make the sauce earlier, and let it cool. Then I blend it and keep the sauce in the refrigerator right in the blender cup. As I'm prepping the final dinner elements, I can take it out of the refrigerator, put it in a sauce pan to reheat it and serve. The blender cup doesn't take up nearly as much room in my refrigerator as the big blender attachment would. (Same idea goes for the dressings I was mentioning. I can make the dressing earlier, put it in the fridge, and right before I serve the salad, I can whiz it. This eliminates the frustration of a separated salad dressing. The dressing will be fully emulsified if you mix it right before serving, and makes the dressing taste lighter and smoother).

As you step out to do your shopping, or go online to make your choices, add "Zola's Appliance of the Year" to your options.

The recipient will be glad you did (at least if they are like me).

Cheers,