

# RANGE TOPS

THE MOST FAMILIAR PIECE OF EQUIPMENT IN THE COMMERCIAL KITCHEN...

## GREEN THUMB QUICK TIPS:

- Higher input burners do not use more energy to cook: although the input rate is higher, the cook time is correspondingly shorter.
- Hot tops are typically preheated once in the morning, and left at maximum input all day. They consume energy at a high rate, and radiate more heat into the kitchen than any other type of range top.
- Induction is an electric heating technology that rivals gas for instant heat and fast response to controls



## RANGE TOPS 101:

The most familiar piece of equipment in restaurant kitchens is the range. Topped with several gas burners or electric elements, typically incorporating a standard oven, the ranges used in food service operations are much like those installed in most homes. The major difference is durability: a food service range must withstand constant use and abuse while preparing hundreds of meals a day.

Open gas burners remain the burner of choice for most chefs. They are inherently sturdy, inexpensive and they respond instantly when the burner is turned on and adjusted. The flame shows the cook how much heat is being applied to the pot and can ignite spattered grease to "flash" flame into the pan during display cooking. Hot tops offer more surface area: a cast iron or steel plate heated by gas burners or electric elements. Unlike open gas burners or glowing electric elements, hot tops don't give visual feedback of heat setting or quick response to control changes. They do, however, offer high durability and plenty of surface area for cooking.

The standard input rating for open gas burners has historically been 20 kBtu/h. Chefs would commonly drill larger holes in the burner to increase the output; this allowed for more flame and flare during display cooking. Manufacturers have recently responded with certified 30kBtu/h burners, which are becoming the standard on heavy duty ranges.

A new element in range top cooking is the induction range top. Induction coils beneath a sealed cooking surface create a magnetic field that acts directly on the bottom of the pot to produce instant heat. Available for years in household versions, induction technology is becoming available in low-cost, highly durable units that may expand the electric range top's appeal to commercial food service operators

*The FSTC has tested various ranges and has reports available on several models. You can get a customized look at what appliance energy is costing you in your operation by contacting your PG&E Marketing Representative. If you want to look at actual performance figures from our laboratory trials or our Production Test Kitchen monitoring, check out the list of published Reports for a title that matches your interests, or browse through the Abstracts for a more detailed summary*