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## ▢ Stuff I Like

This is a list of a bunch of stuff I've bought after reading reviews, trying out several options, and ultimately... way too much min-maxing.

- *FYI - some of these will have my affiliate links - ▢*

### Best Personal Finance / Budget App

- [Monarch](#)
  - Had to switch from Mint at the beginning of 2024. Tried out several others like Empower (Personal Finance) and

### Best Toaster / Toaster Oven

- [Balmuda Toaster](#)
  - This was on my radar for a long time and I was like "there's no way a toaster oven could be worth \$300!" - turns out, I was wrong. This is totally worth it. I tried it out at a hostel in Japan and was instantly sold.

### Best Rice Cooker

- [Zojirushi NS-ZCC10 Neuro Fuzzy Cooker](#)
  - During Covid, my parents needed a new rice cooker, so I gave them our previous Neuro Fuzzy and tried to get good at making rice in an Instant Pot so I could save appliance space. It was fine, but never got close to good.
  - This rice cooker is amazing. It also has little handles on it. It doesn't seem like that would matter, but it does.
  - Takes a little while, but programmable and awesome.
  - My only takeaway from cooking rice in the Instant Pot (it's a great pressure cooker) - is that brown rice cooks MUCH faster, so that might be worth it if you don't cook rice til last minute.

### Best TV (if you care about aesthetics)

- [Samsung Frame](#)
  - These only mount flush against the wall. So be sure you can properly mount low
  - Get at least 55 inch. Probably 65 inch best
  - Have had the 85 inch. It's amazing.
  - Frame pieces (or just go w/black) - It's annoying to have to pay \$200 for plastic frame around it, but the white angled bezel is definitely the best one. Trust me, I tried 4 of them... the other ones look dumb. You can also get a custom made one from Etsy w nice wood, but those usually block the motion sensor on the bottom right of the TV that lets it know when to sleep vs when someone is in the room.

### Best Ice Cream Scooper

- [Zeroll Ice Cream Scoop](#)
  - Conductive and just works
  - Never hard to scoop ice cream or get it out of the scooper
  - Don't put in dishwasher

### Easiest wireless & portable outdoor security cam

- [Blink Outdoor Wireless \(4th Generation\)](#)
  - 2 AA Batteries for 2+ years
  - Handles Chicago weather
  - I have 2nd Gen. 4th is better (tho pricier)

### Best stepstool (if you have some space)

- [Cramer Kik 2 Step Stool](#)
  - Basically the cool library stools you remember
  - Slides and sturdy. Better than plastic versions in build & smoothness
  - Cool colors to choose from make it more of a "piece"

### Best soundbar (if you care about aesthetics)

- Sonos Beam
  - White
  - Not massive

- NOT massive
- Sound is great
- Works even better w Small Sub

#### **Best motion sensing LED (mountable & rechargeable)**

- 1 - Best Colors & Motion Sensing
  - Warm to cool white
  - Senses even if the overhead lights are on to give more light when needed
- 2 - Reliable & nice soft on/off
  - Fade on and fade off is nice
  - Always senses properly
  - Only cool white though

Awesome Indoor Ladder

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#### **Easy access Japanese Whiskies**

- Hibiki Harmony (NAS)
  - Costco has this, but your local store should as well. Starting to get a little pricey but sometimes goes on sale. Nice deal at \$70
- Akashi White
  -
- Fuji NAS
  - Additional expressions starting to make their way to the states.
  - Cool little Mt. Fuji at the bottom of the bottle

#### **Best way to integrate Google Cameras & Doorbell into Apple Home**

- Starling
  - Super simple & works great

#### **Best Scratching Post for curious cats**

- This one
  - Doesn't get easily torn up by cats
  - Place near spots they scratch
  - Multiple colors based on room
  - Is a little perch they can stand on too

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