BILL'S HOME TECH

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Use a Tablet as a Kitchen Screen

Give a spare tablet a second life as a hands-free kitchen companion

Plain-English tech help from:
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Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

Even an old tablet from a drawer makes a great kitchen screen. The two things that matter most: a stand to prop it at a readable angle, and a Display setting change so the screen stays awake mid-recipe (Settings Display Auto-Lock/Sleep long or Never). Use the built-in voice assistant hands-free — "Hey Siri" or "Hey Google" — for timers, music, and questions.

Keep it well back from the sink and stove, and feel free to leave it charging. Kept on a stand while charging, many tablets can also show an always-on clock-and-photos display between cooking sessions.

1 The Short Version

A tablet — even an older one gathering dust in a drawer — makes a wonderful kitchen screen. Propped on a stand, it shows your recipe at a comfortable size, keeps the screen from going dark mid-step, sets timers and plays music by voice, and lets you video-call family while you cook. With a little setup, it becomes the heart of a hands-free kitchen.

This guide shows you how to set up a tablet for the kitchen — a good stand, keeping the screen awake, hands-free voice control, and protecting it from spills and heat — and even how to turn an old tablet into an always-on kitchen display.

- An old or spare tablet is perfect — no need to buy anything new.
- A stand and a 'keep the screen on' setting are the two things that matter most.
- Use voice control so sticky hands never touch the glass.
- Keep it back from spills and heat, and it'll last for years.

TIP

Before buying anything, check your drawers — a tablet you stopped using a few years ago is very likely all you need for a kitchen screen.

2 What You Can Do With a Kitchen Tablet

A tablet earns its spot on the counter by doing several jobs at once — the things you'd otherwise juggle a phone, a cookbook, a timer, and a radio for.

- Show a recipe at a readable size, with big text you can zoom.
- Set timers and ask questions by voice.
- Play music, the radio, or a cooking show while you work.
- Video-call a relative to cook 'together' from afar.
- Watch a short technique video right where you're standing.

GOOD TO KNOW

Because a tablet's screen is bigger than a phone's, it's far easier to read a recipe across the counter — which is the whole reason it's so pleasant to cook from.

3 Pick or Repurpose a Tablet

Almost any tablet will do. It doesn't need to be new or fast — showing a recipe and setting a timer asks very little of it.

- An old iPad or Android tablet from a drawer is ideal.
- It just needs to turn on, connect to Wi-Fi, and hold a charge well enough.
- If the battery is weak, no matter — you'll often keep it plugged in anyway.
- A cracked-but-working screen is fine for kitchen duty.

> **TIP**
> A tablet you've 'retired' is perfect for this — giving it a second life as a kitchen screen is cheaper and greener than buying anything, and it doesn't matter if it's a few years old.

4 Get a Good Stand

The one accessory worth having is a stand to prop the tablet upright at a readable angle. It keeps the screen in view and your hands free, and it keeps the tablet off the wet counter.

- A simple fold-out tablet stand is inexpensive and works well.
- An adjustable angle lets you see the screen whether you're standing or sitting.
- A stand that raises it off the counter keeps it clear of crumbs and splashes.
- Some stands mount under a cabinet to save counter space entirely.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Propping the tablet up rather than laying it flat does two good things at once: the screen is far easier to read, and it's safer from spills pooling on the counter.

5 Keep the Screen From Going Dark

The most annoying thing about cooking from a screen is it going dark just as your hands are covered in dough. A quick settings change fixes it so the recipe stays visible.

1. Open Settings and find Display (or Display & Brightness).
2. Look for Auto-Lock, Screen Timeout, or Sleep.
3. Set it to a long time — or 'Never' while you're cooking.
4. Remember to set it back to a shorter time afterward to save battery.

> **TIP**
> Many recipe and cooking apps have a built-in 'keep screen on while cooking' option — if yours does, turn it on and you won't need to change the main setting at all.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

6 Control It by Voice, Hands-Free

The point of a kitchen screen is to touch it as little as possible. Every tablet has a built-in voice assistant that handles the common jobs without a tap.

- On an iPad: "Hey Siri, set a timer for 15 minutes."
- On an Android tablet: "Hey Google, set a 15-minute timer."
- Ask either to play music, answer a question, or set several named timers.
- Make sure 'Hey Siri' or 'Hey Google' is turned on in settings first.

1. Open Settings and find the voice assistant (Siri, or Google Assistant).
2. Turn on the hands-free wake phrase ('Hey Siri' / 'Hey Google').
3. Follow the short setup where it learns your voice.
4. Test it: say the phrase and set a timer.

7 Recipes on the Tablet

Whether your recipes live in a notes app, a recipe app, or on websites, the tablet shows them beautifully. Pair this with your digital recipe box if you've made one.

- Open your saved recipes from Notes, a recipe app, or your 'Recipes' album.
- Pinch to zoom in so the text is large and easy to read across the counter.
- Keep the recipe you're cooking open and the screen awake.
- Use a bookmark or favorites so your go-to recipes are one tap away.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you keep a digital recipe box (we have a whole guide on that), the kitchen tablet is where it really pays off — your whole collection, readable and searchable, right on the counter.

8 Timers, Music, and Video Calls

Beyond recipes, the tablet replaces a handful of kitchen gadgets, all by voice or a tap.

- Timers: set several named ones by voice ("a 20-minute timer called chicken").
- Music or radio: ask the assistant, or open a music app.
- Video calls: use FaceTime, or an app like WhatsApp or Zoom, to cook 'with' family.
- Prop it so a video-call relative can see your hands at the counter.

TIP

A video call while cooking is a lovely way to share a holiday recipe with a daughter or grandchild far away — you cook side by side even from across the country.

9 Protect It From Spills and Heat

A kitchen is hard on electronics, but a little care keeps the tablet safe for years. Water and heat are the two things to guard against.

- Keep it well back from the sink, the sprayer, and the stovetop.
- A clear, wipeable case or even a zip-top bag protects against splashes.
- Don't set it near steam from a boiling pot or the heat of the oven.
- Wipe the screen with a dry or barely-damp cloth, never a dripping one.

WATCH OUT

Water and screens don't mix. Keep the tablet away from the edge of the sink and out of the path of splashes — that one habit prevents the only real way a kitchen tablet comes to harm.

10 Charging and Battery

Because it may be on for long stretches, think about power so it's ready when you want it.

- Keep a charger near the tablet's kitchen spot so it's easy to top up.
- Many people simply leave it plugged in on the stand while cooking.
- If the battery is old and weak, staying plugged in solves it entirely.
- Run the cord safely, not across a walkway or near the sink.

GOOD TO KNOW

It's perfectly fine to leave a kitchen tablet plugged in — modern tablets are built to stay on the charger without harm, so a tired old battery is no obstacle to kitchen duty.

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11 Turn an Old Tablet Into an Always-On Display

If you'd like the tablet to act like a smart display — showing the time, your photos, or the weather when you're not cooking — both Apple and Google offer a standby or hub mode that does exactly that while it charges.

- On a recent iPad kept on its stand and charging, it can show a standby screen with clock and widgets.
- On an Android tablet, a 'Hub' or screen-saver mode shows a clock, photos, and controls while charging.
- Either turns the tablet into a glanceable kitchen display between cooking sessions.
- Set it up once and the tablet earns its keep all day, not just when you cook.

TIP

These always-on modes usually switch on only when the tablet is both on a stand and charging — another good reason to keep a charger at its kitchen spot.

12 When It's Not Cooperating

A few common snags and their quick fixes.

- Screen keeps going dark: set Auto-Lock/Sleep to a long time or Never.
- Voice assistant won't answer: check the wake phrase is turned on in settings.
- Can't find your recipes: make sure it's on Wi-Fi and signed into your account.
- Running slow: close other apps, or restart the tablet (hold the power button).

13 Tablet, Smart Display, or Phone?

People often ask which kitchen screen is best. They each have strengths, and a tablet you already own is a fine choice. Here is how they compare.

	Tablet	Smart display	Phone
Screen size	Large, easy to read	Medium	Small
Hands-free voice	Yes	Yes, built for it	Yes
Cost	Free if you have one	Must buy one	Already have it
Video calls while cooking	Great	Good	Fine

GOOD TO KNOW

If you already have a tablet in a drawer, it is the sensible place to start — big screen, no cost, and it does nearly everything a purpose-built smart display does.

14 A Few Useful Apps for the Kitchen

You do not need much, but a few free apps make a kitchen tablet more capable. Install only what you will actually use.

- A recipe app, or just your notes app, for the recipes themselves.
- A music or radio app for something to cook to.
- A video-call app (FaceTime, WhatsApp, or Zoom) to cook "with" family.
- A timer or clock app, though the voice assistant usually covers this.

> **TIP**
> Resist filling the tablet with apps. A handful you use beats a screen full you have to hunt through with floury fingers — keep the ones you cook with on the first screen.

15 Common Questions

A few things people often ask about using a tablet in the kitchen, answered plainly.

- Is my old tablet too slow? Almost certainly not — showing a recipe and a timer asks very little of it.
- Will leaving it plugged in harm it? No — modern tablets are built to stay on the charger.
- The screen keeps dimming — how do I stop it? Set Display sleep to a long time or Never while cooking.
- Can I use it hands-free? Yes — turn on "Hey Siri" or "Hey Google" for timers and questions.
- What if it gets splashed? Keep it back from the sink and in a wipeable case; water is the only real hazard.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> The thread here is encouraging: a kitchen tablet asks little and gives a lot. An old device, a stand, one settings change, and voice turned on — and you have a capable counter companion for free.

16 When to Call Bill

Turning a spare tablet into a kitchen screen is a small project with a big daily payoff, and it's an easy, pleasant one to do together. If setting it up, keeping the screen awake, or getting voice control working is fiddly, I'm glad to help.

I come to you, set your tablet up for the kitchen, get a stand placed safely, turn on the keep-awake and voice-assistant settings, load up your recipes, and — if you'd like — set it to act as an always-on display between cooking sessions. You'll leave the visit with a counter companion that does the work of a cookbook, timer, and radio in one.

- You have a spare tablet and want it set up for the kitchen.
- The screen keeps going dark or the voice assistant won't respond.
- You want your recipes and video calls working on it.
- You'd like it to double as an always-on kitchen display.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this handy. A stand and a 'keep screen on' setting are the two essentials.

I want to...	Do this...
Reuse an old tablet	Charge it, connect Wi-Fi — it's perfect for the kitchen
Stop the screen going dark	Settings Display Auto-Lock/Sleep long time or Never
Set a timer hands-free	"Hey Siri / Hey Google, set a 15-minute timer"
Read a recipe easily	Open it, pinch to zoom, prop it on a stand
Protect it	Keep it back from the sink and stove; use a wipeable case
Make it an always-on display	Keep it on a stand and charging standby / Hub mode
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Whenever you're ready, I'll come to your home anywhere in Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities, at your pace. Too far for a house call? I also help remotely. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042. — Bill

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