

Cooking without Electricity

Survival cooking is a good skill to develop no matter what your circumstances are. In some parts of the United States the electrical grid is so outdated that even minor storms can mean no power for up to a week or even more. Knowing how to cook during a power outage or how to prepare meals when you have no electricity is just plain common sense.

If you've not thought about survival cooking before now, here are a few tips to help you get ready. Even if you never have to use them, at least you'll know that if you need to, you can.

Invest in a Kerosene Stove and Some Lanterns

You can buy a sturdy little camp stove that runs on a canister of kerosene for as little as \$30, but if you spend a bit more than that, you can get a double burner stove that will get you through even a long power outage quite nicely. If you throw a couple of kerosene lanterns into the bargain, you'll have light to read by in the evenings too.

Cook Meals in Foil Packets

Almost anything can be tucked into a foil packet and cooked on the side of an open fire or over a grill. Good survival cooking will involve getting creative with the ingredients that you have available to you.

Some examples of good combinations include:

- Potatoes, onions, butter and cheese.
- Apples, walnuts, brown sugar and butter.
- Slices of canned ham with canned sweet potatoes, brown sugar, and butter.

To make the packet, layer the contents in the center of a 12 by 12 inch square of foil, fold the sides up and down to form an envelope, then roll the ends up tight to seal it all in. Cook right in the fire.

Invest in a Small Generator

If you live in an area in which the power goes out frequently, a small gasoline-powered generator will allow you to use small electrical appliances like plug in crock pots, casseroles, frying pans, and coffee pots when you want to cook. You don't have to leave the generator running constantly, just turn it on at meal time and use these as you normally would.

Observe Fire Safety Rules

- Do not bring a gas grill or stove inside your home, as this can cause toxic fumes and vapors to build up in your home, and is also a fire hazard.
- Do not build a fire or light a grill close to your home or garage.
- Leave plenty of space so sparks don't fly off and ignite something you want to keep.
- If you cook on a wood stove, keep small children clear of it at all times.
- Never use gasoline to start a wood or charcoal fire; it can explode and burn anyone nearby severely.

PrePare

Purchase and Store a Solar Cooker

Solar cookers are inexpensive and a surprisingly effective way to cook without electricity. Most use reflective surfaces to concentrate the heat of the sun onto a cook surface in the center of the reflection area. Solar cookers are so inexpensive and easy to carry that you can keep one in your car and one in your pantry for emergency use without breaking the bank. They're fun for the kids too, and quite safe.

Conclusion

Cooking without electricity doesn't have to be scary. A well stocked pantry and an emergency cooking source (or better yet, two or three) can make all the difference between life and death. Kids love to cook outdoors, and most people enjoy a challenge now and then. Make sure you always follow proper food safety and fire safety. That combined with your best camping skills and pioneer ingenuity, will get you through even an extended power outage feeling competent and fed.