

How to Reduce Energy Use While Cooking

Most people are very concerned about reducing their [energy use](#), whether it is for financial reasons, or environmental concerns. Follow the advice below to help reduce your energy use during cooking.

Steps

- 1 Minimize the number of times you open the oven, refrigerator and freezer doors, or remove a lid from a pot.** This may benefit from planning ahead what you need to get out prior to opening them.
- 2 Reduce cooking times by thawing frozen foods in the refrigerator beforehand.** Putting frozen items in the refrigerator also reduces the amount of energy it needs to use to maintain its low temperature.
- 3 Match the size of any pots or skillets you use on the stove top elements.** There's no need to use the energy required to heat up the largest element when you're only using the smallest pot in the kitchen. Turn the heat down to the lowest setting that maintains boiling. Higher heat just escapes round the side of the pot or boils the liquid faster, and doesn't increase the temperature of the liquid above boiling or cook its contents faster.
- 4 Use a toaster oven or microwave instead of the stove oven whenever possible.**
- 5 Optimize the use of a preheated oven by cooking several dishes, either at once, or in a row.**
- 6 Keep appliances and pots/pans clean.** The cleaner the surface, the more efficiently it can transfer heat, for both heating and cooling.
 - [How to Clean a Stove](#)
 - [How to Clean a Microwave](#)
 - [How to Clean a Refrigerator](#)
 - [How to Defrost a Freezer](#)
- 7 Don't turn on the oven too soon before you need it.** Just a few minutes may be all that's necessary for pre-heating. Turn off the oven or stovetop a few minutes early. The residual heat will keep cooking the food.
- 8 Cook several meals at once.** You'll skip lots of energy wasted when stuff heats up and cools down. If you're ambitious, [cook once a month](#).
- 9 Use a [Pressure Cooker](#).** It uses less energy than standard cooking.^[1]
- 10 Don't put warm food in the refrigerator.** It takes extra energy to cool it. Let it sit out and cool to room temperature, then put it in the fridge.
- 11 Use a cover when [boiling water](#).** It'll boil faster that way.
- 12 Simmer liquid-cooked food, don't boil it vigorously.** The temperature, and thus the rate of heat conduction into the inside of food to soften it, is limited to the boiling point when there is liquid water present. (A pressure cooker increases the boiling point by adding pressure. Impurities such as sugar or salt increase the boiling point, but not significantly unless they are present in great quantities as with brine or syrup). More heat only increases the heat

right at the pan surface, increasing the possibility of scorching soups and other viscous liquids.

Tips

- Use a solar oven. They really work!
- If you are using an electric stove, turn off the stove before your food is fully cooked and leave it covered on the stove. Electric stove heat lasts a long time, and can finish cooking some dishes even after being turned off.
- Induction stoves are more efficient than other types.
- If you have a gas stove and the flame burns more yellow than blue, it's not burning efficiently. Check the manual or contact the manufacturer.
- In the summer, [Make Sun Tea](#) instead of using the kitchen.

Warnings

- Be aware of potential food poisoning while cooling foods to room temperature. Better to cool rapidly than to risk food borne illness.

Sources and Citations

1. <http://www.care2.com/greenliving/save-kitchen-energy-10-cooking-tips.html>

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