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THE PRESSURE COOKER

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When food is cooked in the ordinary way the steam is allowed to escape, but when cooked in a pressure cooker, which is a steam-tight kettle, all of the steam is retained in the vessel. This creates a pressure which raises the temperature, making the food much hotter than in the ordinary kettle and thereby shortening the time of cooking.

Advantages of the Pressure Cooker. (1) The pressure cooker saves time and fuel. On the wood stove time of cooking is reduced one-half. On gas and electric stoves time is reduced from one-third to two-thirds.

- (2) Foods will not burn in cooking.
- (3) It is not necessary to stir contents of kettle.
- (4) The whole meal can be cooked in one dish, thereby saving dish washing.
- (5) Food will keep hot longer in a pressure cooker.
- (6) Since less loss of minerals and juices results, the food flavor is better retained.

Hints for Using a Pressure Cooker. (1) Time is saved by having cooker hot when food is put in.

- (2) When used on wood stove oil the bottom of cooker (so it will clean easily) and place over the direct flame.
- (3) Start with a hot fire and lower the flame or move cooker to the back of the wood stove when the desired pressure is reached.
- (4) Seal gaskets in the bottom of the kettle before adding the water.
- (5) As none is lost by evaporation, add less water for boiling.
- (6) Let the pressure fall to zero before opening the pet cock. Remove the lid after all steam has escaped through the pet cock.
- (7) When the cooker is used for a whole meal, separate containers are used. These may be glass fruit jars, or pails which stand side by side on the bottom rack, or one pan may be placed on top of another, separated by a piece of heavy galvanized screening. No lids are necessary as flavors do not mingle.
- (8) Keep all parts of pressure cooker clean.
- (9) On a wood stove it takes an average of 15 minutes to get 20 pounds pressure.
- (10) Time is saved by cooking foods together that require the same length of time.

Types of Food Adapted to a Pressure Cooker. Coarse cereals, legumes, root vegetables, tubers, tough meats, dried fruits.

Foods Not Suitable to Pressure Cooker. (1) Strong vegetables such as turnips, onions, and cabbage. The high temperature darkens the food and increases the flavor.

(2) Brown breads and steamed pudding when cooked at a high pressure. A good product may be obtained if cooked at 3 pounds pressure for 1½ hours or if cooked with the pet cock open.

Preparation of a Meal. A meal like the following may be successfully prepared using the pressure cooker.

MENU	
Roast beef	Gray
Potatoes	Buttered carrots
	Dried prunes

Method. Set cooker on stove to heat while preparing the meat. Sear the pot roast in the bottom of cooker until the desired brown color, season with salt and pepper, and add 1 c boiling water. Put on lid, leave pet cock open until steam begins to escape, then close and cook at 3 pounds pressure for 30 minutes. Let pressure go down to zero, exhaust steam, remove lid, and place rack on top of meat; set pan containing potatoes on this rack. Place another rack on pan of potatoes, and set the pans of carrots and fruit on this rack, repeating until the steamer is filled.

Put lid on, clamp down. Leave pet cock open until the steam begins to come out; close, and let the pressure rise to 3 pounds. Remove the cooker to the back of the stove, let pressure fall to zero, open the cooker, season the carrots, and place food on the table.

Beef Stew with Dumplings. Cut meat in small pieces and sear in the bottom of the cooker until the desired brown; add salt, pepper, and vegetables. Cook for 30 minutes at 20 pounds pressure. Exhaust the steam. Open the lid and drop dumplings on the stew. Replace lid and steam 12 minutes with pet cock open.

TABLE ILLUSTRATING USE OF PRESSURE COOKER FOR VARIOUS FOODS

Food	Preparation	Time at 20 pounds pressure
Dried fruit (peaches, prunes, apricots)	Soak 1½ hours	10 minutes
Potatoes (Irish)	Wash and pare	10 minutes
Carrots (sweet)	Wash and scrape	10 minutes
Beets, young	Wash	15 minutes
Beets, old	Wash	30 minutes
French beans	Soak 1½ hours	15 minutes
Cream of wheat	Stir into boiling salted water; cook until thick	10 minutes
Rolled oats	Stir into boiling salted water; cook until thick.	15 minutes
Rice	Soak 30 minutes	15 minutes
Corn meal mush	Stir into boiling salted water; cook until thick.	25 minutes
Chicken	Cut in pieces, season, and sear	25 to 40 minutes
Pot roasts	Sear and season	30 minutes. Allow 10 minutes a pound for meat.
Dried beans	Soak 1½ hours	45 minutes
Dried peas	Soak 1½ hours	45 minutes
Steamed date pudding	Batter poured into can; lid put on can.	3 pounds pressure 1½ hours
Boston brown bread	Batter poured into can; lid put on can.	1½ hours

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