

Cooking Under Pressure

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This year's Miami County Fair is now history but one of the topics we shared at one of the Learning Corner programs was about the new electric pressure cookers on the market and how to use them. Buying a pressure cooker is an investment in both money and time that will quickly be repaid in health and savings. Why get a pressure cooker? These are the things that make pressure cookers special.

PRESSURE COOKING IS.....

FAST - The contents of the cooker cook at a higher temperature than what can be achieved at a conventional boil—so more heat means more speed. Pressure cooking is about twice as fast as conventional cooking. Saves on prep time - is 70% faster than conventional ovens! The secret is the air-tight lid. It locks into place, trapping super-heated steam inside.

HEALTHY - Pressure cooking is one of the healthiest cooking methods. According to a study published in the Journal of Food Science, pressure cooking preserves 90-95% of the vitamins. Its flavor infusion technology retains almost all of the natural moisture, flavor, nutrients of every ingredient and you can incorporate the liquid into your meal also.

GREEN -Pressure cookers need less energy/electricity to operate during the cooking process. Less heat and less time translate to a 70% energy savings over conventional cooking.

EASY - Pressure cooking isn't complicated at all. Push a button to reach pressure and flip a switch to release it. It's really as easy as 1, 2, 3, and 4.

CLEAN - As long as the lid is secure on your pressure cooker, there will be no splashing, boiling over or escaping steam. Also only one pot to clean when you're done!

SAFE - Modern pressure cookers have redundant safety systems to ensure that if one should fail, another will kick in.

VERSATILE - Many appliances in one as it works as an electric pressure cooker, slow cooker, rice cooker, yogurt maker, steamer, warmer, and sauté pan all in one.

MONEY-SAVING - You can save money by buying cheaper cuts of meat because it adds moisture and causes your meats to soften and become very tender during the pressure cooking process.

For safety tips/operating instructions, read your instruction manual before using.

Buying Considerations: Electric pressure multi cookers are having their moment, and it's a mind-bending task to choose from the flood of literally hundreds of choices available right now. Choosing a dependable manufacturer that sells replacement parts and are easily reachable should be your first consideration. Make sure the electric pressure cooker you choose has at least two pressure cooking pressures – high and low. Some offer specialty programs such as Yogurt Making. If the ability to make yogurt is important to you, make sure the cooker has a specific “yogurt program” – a specially programmed time and temperature range.

Pressure Canning - According to the USDA National Center for Home Food Preservation, no electric pressure or multi cookers have been approved for pressure canning. These electric pressure cookers have not been tested to prove they are safe for canning low-acid foods. **Do not use them for this purpose.**

Consider the wattage – it is everything to an electric pressure cooker – the higher the wattage, the hotter the heating element will burn and the faster the cooker will reach pressure. This doesn't seem like a big deal now, but when you're at home staring at the pressure cooker to start those minutes will seem like hours. A 1000 watt pressure cooker can take an average of 13 minutes to reach pressure, while a 1300 watt one will do it in five. So in the wattage department, go big or go wait.

Size recommendations are 1 qt. per person – so a 6 qt. pressure cooker can be used for six people or less, and an 8 qt. for eight people or less. There is now a new 3 qt. size available for singles, dorm rooms or traveling.

If you are wanting to know more about these new appliances or would like a handout from our recent program, contact our Marais des Cygnes Extension District office at 913-294-4306 or come by and request a copy. It can be found on-line at: <http://www.maraisdescyignes.k-state.edu/health-nutrition/knowledge-at-noon/recipes-2017/Index.html>