

Solar Oven Tips

Allow a couple of hours preparation time when using your oven for the 1st time.

1. When pre-heating solar oven, slightly prop up the lid and face it in the direction of the sun.
2. Cooking time in the winter is best from 10 am to 2 pm. Summer could be from 8 a.m. to 6 pm. The closer to evening the less heat you'll have.
3. Never leave your oven in the cooking angle without food or water in it unless pre-heating
4. Use hot pads – it really is as hot as the thermometer says it is – and consider sun glasses because of the glare
5. Place food in oven and relock the side locks
6. To position – stand behind the oven and point it directly toward the sun
7. Check position about every 20 minutes in case you need to re-direct it.
8. If baking, make sure oven is at least 250 degrees before you put food in so things will rise properly. Like a crock pot - cooking solar can take twice as long as regular time. However food will not burn nor overcook.
9. Check size of oven before buying pots or pans. Use dark pots with tight fitting lids to absorb heat so cooking will go faster. Smoked glass is also good because it lets you see how the cooking is going without opening the oven – opening the glass door will drop the heat 50 to 100 degrees. Stirring usually not required.
10. Stainless steel or shiny aluminum pans reflect the heat instead of holding it in. If it's all you have, cover with dark cloth. Paint a canning jar black with strip of masking tape from top of jar to the bottom and up other side before painting then remove tape and you can see inside the jar while cooking.
11. If overcast, allow longer cooking time and use the 10 to 2 time frame. Stews and soups work well for overcasts as they just need to simmer. Don't leave food at a temperature between 50 and 125 degrees for 3 or 4 hours as bacteria could still grow so watch temperature and bring inside to finish cooking if necessary.
12. Use about 1/3 less water for rice, vegetables and pasta and food is still plenty moist.
13. Use it for pasteurizing water, killing infestations in grain or dried food, sanitizing dishes, drying firewood, sprouting foods, and decrystallizing honey or jam. Rule of thumb is: germs can't grow at 120 degrees, water is pasteurized at 150 degrees, foods will cook at 180 degrees and water boils at 212 degrees.
14. Protect the oven from wind and animals
15. <http://solarcooking.wikia.com/wiki/Recipes>
16. Knox gelatin in place of eggs for baking – Combine 1 tsp gelatin with 3 Tbls cold water, stir until dissolved. Add 2 Tbls plus 1 tsp of Hot water and stir. Decrease liquid in your own recipes about ¼ cup to compensate for the added water from the “egg.” Knox gelatin has an indefinite shelf life and substitutes for eggs in all baking.

