Top 6 Benefits of Pressure Cooking

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Pressure cookers have been around for a long time, but the thought of using one still does not appeal to some. This reluctance may be due to childhood memories of a screeching pressure cooker followed by an explosion that sent the evening's dinner splattering all over
the ceiling in the kitchen.

Many people can remember that as children they were hurried out of the kitchen whenever the pressure cooker was on the stove.

Modern-day pressure cookers have taken the risk out of pressure cooking. Pressure cookers today do not emit that high-pitched screeching sound, and they have safety features which prevent excess pressure build up, and locking lid handles which will not open until the pressure is released. They are a huge improvement on the noisy, steam spitting, rattling pots that many people were familiar with in years past.

Combination 'cooker/canners' are designed to be all-purpose pressure cooking cookware. These are lightweight enough for convenient use in everyday meal preparation, yet with sturdy locking, pressure control lids for use in canning small

batches of preserved foods.

Pressure ‘canners’, such as the heavy-duty All-American series, are more heavily constructed and designed for preserving food in jars for long term storage. Pressure canners offer the same benefits as pressure cookers, but commonly have larger capacities needed to preserve jars of meats, fish and many other types of food. Large pressure canners are not commonly used for everyday stovetop cooking since they are heavy and the thicker casting takes more time to heat up.

Having a pressure cooker as a part of your food preparation equipment offers several advantages. Here are the six top benefits of pressure cooking:

1. **Foods retain most of their nutrients and are tastier**

Eating foods that are pressure cooked offers more nutritional boost than those cooked for longer periods using traditional cookware. The longer foods are cooked, the more nutrients are destroyed.

Foods cooked in a pressure cooker are ready faster, using less liquid. The liquid is boiled away leaving the food with most of its nutrients. The fact that foods are done in a shorter cooking time means they are less likely to lose their color and flavor, as well as minerals and vitamins that are evaporated or diluted when cooking in large quantities of water for longer periods of time. Pressure cookers reduce cooking time by as much as 70%, which is a great reduction in the time foods normally stay on the stove boiling or steaming away the natural taste and the nutrients. Overall, pressure cooking enhances the richness and natural flavors of foods.

2. Saves energy

Pressure cooking is far more efficient than using multiple pots on separate burners, and can result in significant energy savings. This is because pressure cookers lend themselves to one-pot cooking recipes. And since foods require less cooking time with pressure cookers, less energy is needed to prepare meals. With the ever-escalating cost of electricity, we all want to find ways to save on energy and reduce the size of our monthly bill.

3. Saves time in preparing meals

Cooking time is greatly reduced as foods cook up to 70% faster when a pressure cooker is used, making it a handy tool to quickly get the meal on the table.

We can all remember those days when we arrive home from work too tired to cook, and need to make dinner in a hurry. On days like this, the pressure cooker can be used to whip up a nutritious and tasty one-pot meal in mere minutes. Throw in all the ingredients and you'll have the dinner ready by the time you are through tidying up the kitchen and setting the table.

4. The kitchen is cooler

With summers getting warmer, as evidenced by the recent record heat waves across much of the country, reducing the heat generated by cooking is key to a cool kitchen. When cooking with regular stovetop pots and pans, the heat rises through the pan and travels upwards. Some of this heat is directed out of the house via the stovetop fan, but heat also builds in the kitchen while cooking. By contrast, a pressure cooker retains the heat and steam so that none of it escapes to heat up your kitchen. Reducing the amount of heat and steam results in a

cooler kitchen.

5. **Less cleaning is required**

Cooking with regular stovetop pots tends to leave cooking residues on the stove top and control panel as well on adjacent surfaces such as walls and counters. Steam and oils escape from open cookware to settle on these surfaces, which usually requires some cleanup after the meal is cooked. A pressure cooker, however, has a well secured lid that prevents any splashes or spatters from escaping the cooking vessel. This also eliminates any boil overs which require further cleanup. And when meal preparation is complete, there's only one pot to wash.

6. **Pressure cookers can also be used to preserve food**

Pressure cookers, of course, are also designed for canning foods to be stored for future use. This is why the larger models are often referred to as 'canners'. Pressure canners usually develop up to 15psi, the high-pressure needed to cook and can foods, including meats and fish. The smaller, lighter pressure cookers can also be used for home canning but they hold fewer jars than larger models. While having this canning facility, the smaller volume cookers are mostly used for everyday stovetop meal preparation.?

Gardeners, hunters and homesteaders who preserve quantities of jars of food usually prefer the largest pressure cooker/canners since more (and larger) jars can be processed per batch. In our home we use the All American Model 921. Most of our neighbors also prefer the same model.

Pressure cooker/canners come with detailed cooking and canning instructions which include charts of the foods which can be canned, time schedules and pressure settings for each food

type. It is essential that these instructions be followed carefully to ensure safe food preservation.

Once you learn how handle the pressure cooker, there is absolutely nothing to fear. Even when the steam has been released, be in the habit of keeping your face away from the pot opening to avoid any residual steam or hot splatters. Put a towel down on the counter surface for setting the hot lid after removing it. If you are canning, set another towel down to set the hot jars on; this protects the counter and absorbs the wetness from the jar bottoms.

Pay attention to the psi of the pressure cooker when you go to purchase one. Your options will be between a stovetop cooker and an electric cooker, but ensure that you select one that will give the highest psi. For stovetop cookers this will be 15psi while most electric cookers may only be able to go up to 10psi.

The All-American pressure cookers are high-quality pressure cookers. Since these cookers can last a lifetime with careful use, we recommend this high quality brand. The cookers are made of aluminum or stainless steel. A six quart cooker will provide a hearty meal for the average family, and a large family would find an eight quart cooker most ideal.

?It is time to get past the mystery and hesitation in using pressure cookers. Not only are the modern versions of this cooking technology safer and much less annoying then the older cookers, but the benefits they offer are also too good to pass up.