**Thermal Cooking, or Retained Heat Cooking, using a Wonder Oven**

Thermal cooking, or retained heat cooking, is the process of using retained heat to cook food. A box-like structure is constructed using cotton fabric and filled with polystyrene beads (the kind that were used in bean bag chairs). The cooking pot, which contains water or broth, and the “food”, such as beans, is initially brought to a boil using a heat source - a stove, a fire, a camp stove or a buddy burner. Then the pot is removed from the heat source, covered with a lid, and placed in the Wonder Oven. A layer of polystyrene beads is the insulating material that keeps the food hot and allows it to continue cooking. This technique is not new. Long ago, farmers used the retained heat method to cook food. They would use saw dust, straw, hay or thick blankets as the insulating material to keep the pot hot.

The food to be cooked generally requires a longer cooking time, such as wheat, beans, rice, meat or bread. Once the pot is in the Wonder Oven, no more “cooking fuel” or energy is needed. That is one of the advantages of retained heat cooking – greatly reduced cooking fuel.

The Wonder Oven will also keep Cold Food COLD!

The process to cook food using retained heat is fairly simple.

1. A Dutch oven or Stock Pot (something with NO extended handle) is filled with enough water or broth to cover the food to be cooked.
2. Use a size of pot that is similar to the amount of food being cooked.
3. Do not use a pot with a long handle, as the handle will transfer the heat out of, or away from, the pot. If the heat is removed from the pot, the cooking process will slow down, or stop altogether.
4. Make sure that the pot has a lid that fits well (tight fitting).
5. Place the pot on a heat source and bring the water or liquid to a boil, along with the food to be cooked.
6. Once the water has come to a boil, put the lid on the pot and place it in the Wonder Oven and cover the pot with the Wonder Oven lid. Snug it up around the pot. That’s it!! The food will continue to cook on its own.
7. DO NOT PEEK while the food is cooking. If you remove the lids while the food is cooking, valuable heat will be lost, reducing the ability of the food to cook properly.
8. The danger zone for food is between 40 degrees and 140 degrees. You do not want the temperature in the pot you are cooking to fall below 140 degrees.

**What can you “cook” in the Wonder Oven?**

Wheat – cracked wheat cereal

Beans and legumes

Rice

Vegetables – Potatoes, Beets, carrots etc.

Meats – Chicken, Pork, Beef

Bread – The bread is steamed, rather than baked. It will not have a “crust”.

Soups and Main Dishes

Chicken broth

**How to cook Rice in a Wonder Oven**

Use a 2- or 3- quart pot

2 C. Rice

2 Tbsp. Oil

2 ½ C. Water, heat before adding to rice

Put the rice and oil in the pot. Place on burner and turn heat to medium high. Let the rice sizzle a little, stirring constantly.

Add the water and bring to a boil. Let the rice boil for 5 minutes.

Place the lid on the pot and put it in the Wonder Oven. Put the Wonder Oven lid on the pot and snug it up. Let the rice cook for 40 minutes. Enjoy!

**Chicken Broth**

Put the carcass of a deboned rotisserie chicken into a pot. Put everything else in – the skin, the fat and the juices and/or gelatin from the bottom of the chicken container. Add water to the pot to cover the carcass. Bring to a boil. Cover and place in the Wonder Oven. Put the Wonder Oven lid on top. Let everything cook and steep for several hours. Strain the bones and skin when done. You will end up with beautiful chicken broth.

**Potatoes or Beets**

Rinse and scrub the vegetables to remove dirt. Put the unpeeled vegetables in the pot and cover with water. Bring the pot to a boil. Remove the pot from the heat. Cover the pot and place it in the Wonder Oven. Put the Wonder Oven lid on top. Let the food cook for several hours. When done cooking, remove the pot from the Wonder Oven. Take the vegetables out of the Wonder Oven and let cool. Remove the skins and use how you normally would.

**How to make Bread in a Wonder Oven**

1. Make your bread recipe as you normally do and let it rise.
2. Grease some cans. Good cans to use are tomato juice cans, coffee cans, etc.
3. After the bread has risen once, put the dough in the greased cans but do not fill more than half way. Cover the cans with aluminum foil.
4. Put some warm water in a pot that is tall enough for the cans of dough to stand up in. The water does not need to cover the cans, just come up to about 1/3 to ½ of the can. The cans of dough are going to want to float, so try and weight them down if possible. Also, when you put the pot’s lid on, you may need to use a bungee cord to hold it on.
5. Let the bread rise in the pot until it is almost to the top of the can.
6. At this point, turn on the heat and bring the water in the pot to a boil. Let the water gently boil for 10 minutes.
7. Turn off heat and place the pot with the bread dough into the Wonder Oven and cover with the Wonder Oven lid.
8. Let the bread “cook” for about 2 ½ hours. But if you can’t get to the bread for four hours, that is okay. It will still be fine.
9. Remove the cans of bread from the Wonder Oven. Pop the bread out of the cans.
10. Slice and enjoy!

**How to make Cracked Wheat Cereal in a Wonder Oven**

1 C. cracked wheat

½ tsp. salt

2 ½ C. water

Place cracked wheat, salt and water in a pot. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat. Put lid on the pot and place the pot in the Wonder Oven. Cook until tender. I start my cereal at night and by the morning it is ready.

**Cooking Meat in a Wonder Oven**

When cooking meat in the Wonder Oven, you have two options: put the meat directly in the water (corned beef brisket is a great candidate for this) OR place your meat in an oven bag and cinch it with the tie it comes with and put the bag with the meat into the liquid. Then bring the water to a boil and let it boil for 15 – 20 minutes. Cover and place the pot in your Wonder Oven and let it cook for 3 to 5 hours. Safe Internal Temperatures for meat is as follows:

Chicken/Turkey – 165°

Ground Beef – 160°

Steaks, chops, roast – 165°

Ham – 145°