

Nine Practical Pointers for Saving in the Kitchen

Being energy-wise in the kitchen this summer will not only save you on energy bills, but can also help keep your house cool. Brush up on your kitchen efficiency tips, and test your knowledge against some of these unique suggestions.



Image: Flickr

1. Be a matchmaker:

Use the right size pot on stove burners. A 6" pot on an 8" burner wastes over 40% of the burner's heat. Also, cover pots and pans to keep heat in and reduce cooking time.

2. Don't peek:

Every time you open the oven door to look at the food, the oven temperature is lowered by 25°F to 75°F.

3. Nuke 'em:

Microwave ovens are about 66% more efficient than conventional ovens, and they produce less heat. Toaster ovens are a good alternative as well.

4. Be dishwasher-savvy:

Run your dishwasher after 7pm and only wash full loads. Use the air-dry instead of heat-dry setting to cut your dishwasher's energy use by 15-20%.

5. Appliances:

Many utilities offer [cash rebates](#) for ENERGY STAR qualified refrigerators or dishwashers. Some utilities will even give you money for bringing in your old, inefficient appliances.

6. Skip pre-heating:

Except for delicate dishes such as soufflés, the idea that you need to preheat the oven is largely a myth left-over from the days of wood-burning stoves. Save energy by putting your dish in right away and then turning the oven off 10-15 minutes early and let the residual heat finish cooking.

7. Refrigerator coils:

Refrigerators use more electricity than any other single household appliance. [Clean your compressor coils](#) annually to improve efficiency and extend refrigerator life or more often if you have pets.

8. Invest in a pressure cooker:

According to [Planet Green](#), using a pressure cooker can reduce cooking time and energy use by 70 percent. They also help food retain natural juices and vitamins.

9. Test your seal:

Slam a dollar bill in the fridge door. If it slides out easily, it may be time to replace your seal.