

COOKING IN THE MODERN WAY

By Emmett Campbell Hall in May Good Housekeeping Magazine.

Time was long ago when the preparation of food for the table was esteemed an art, and civilization touched high-water mark; then came centuries when men ate chunks of beef that had been half roasted, half burned, before a great roaring fire, and the tide of civilization ran low, like an almost extinguished flame. Today, by all progressive minds, cooking is esteemed not only as an art, but as a science—what it really is, or should be.

From the cook's point of view the ideal heat must be under instant and absolute control. It must be concentrated at the point where it is immediately needed. It should be easily movable from point to point. Electric heat comes the nearest, perhaps, to meeting these conditions. Control is absolute and perfect. Because the heat is applied directly to and immediately beneath the utensil in use, there is no waste. Moreover, there is a latitude in its use not possible with any other form of heat, because of the fact that a cord and plug are all that is necessary to connect with the source of supply wherever there is an electric light fixture. Improvement in apparatus and lower cost of production are now rapidly bringing electricity into common use for cooking purposes.

The coal range is an improvement over the wood-burning stove in so far as the heat is more regular and can be maintained more easily at a fixed intensity, but coal produces heat with ash, soot and coal gas, the last being harmful. Also coal is a heavy and dirty thing to handle. Oil produces heat with soot, smell and gas, and its use entails a certain degree of danger, though explosions with stoves of a good make are rare. Gas produces soot and carbon monoxide.

A generation ago it did not seem so necessary to consider the question of the comfort of the cook as it does today, for most of the cooking was done by servants who accepted the discomforts as natural to their occupation. Then, too, kitchens were generally large rooms, with plenty of windows, not likely to become intolerably hot. But conditions have changed remarkably, especially in the large cities. In the need to economize space the average kitchen has been reduced in size until in many

apartments it is little more than a closet. To many apartment dwellers servants are out of the question, and the cooking for the family must be done by a wife or daughter.

One of the solutions of the cooking problem seems to be found in the electric heating devices, which have at last been brought to such a degree of perfection as to be practical and usable household appliances. It is true that they are not cheap, either in their original cost or in their operation, but the cost is not prohibitive, and, when intelligently operated, the outlay for current need not be great—hardly more than for gas at average prices. Their attraction lies not in any actual economy which their use can accomplish, but in the fact that they make cooking really clean and cool. The operation of cooking may be made so dainty that it can be carried on in the dining room itself, for, in electric cooking, there is neither ash, soot, smell, flame nor gas of any kind, and there is not, of course, any handling of fuel. There is no danger connected with these devices—they will not even "burn out" if the current is thoughtlessly left on.

While it is possible to use ordinary cooking vessels in connection with electric stoves—the latter are simply little metal disks, suitably mounted and insulated and attached to a lamp socket with a cord and plug—these cooking devices which are complete in themselves are more satisfactory as, owing to their construction, there is absolutely no waste of heat, the vessels fitting snugly and fastening securely to the "stoves." There are combination cookers which give much satisfaction, such as double boilers, frying pans and stoves, it being possible to use the flat top of the latter for toasting. A switch permits control of the degree of heat applied.

While one may do almost ideal "light housekeeping" with two or three utensils, to do "sure enough" cooking one should have a complete cooking and baking outfit, which includes an electric oven. In these electric ovens the heat is generated just where it is wanted, on the inside, and there are no products of combustion to be carried away. There is a three-heat switch, and cooking can really be done by the clock, not by guess.

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By reason of the fact that no heat is thrown off by the electric devices, cooking may be done anywhere—on the breakfast table, or on the top of the piano, for that matter. In a small apartment it would not be a bad idea to place the oven in the lower part of a sideboard, and a chafing dish—which is a splendid combination cooker—and the coffee percolator on top.

There are numberless individual appliances to which electric heat may be applied, such as flatirons, with one of which any amount of ironing may be done, as it remains hot so long as the current is on—baby milk warmers, curling-iron heaters, luminous radiators, etc. The luminous radiator is portable and produces heat immediately when the switch is turned. It consists of an ornamental iron frame fitted with a polished copper reflector and large cylindrical incandescent bulbs or glowers. The heat is quick, as the process is by radiation, and not by the slower process of setting up currents of warm air. This heater is especially advantageous for temporary heat on cool days, as the heater may be moved from one room to another as readily as a footstool, or it may be permanently placed in an open fireplace. With it there is the cheerful glow and warmth of an open fire without

the danger of flying sparks or the inconvenience of handling fuel.

The cost of operating electric cooking devices depends, of course, upon the cost of current at any particular place, but, when intelligently used, the expense should not greatly exceed that of gas.

There is no more magic in electricity than in coal, and carelessness, wastefulness or ignorance will waste this kind of heat just as it will that produced by gas. To begin with, the stove must be properly installed; to end with, it must be properly used. When these two things are cared for the cost of using such a stove is equivalent to using gas at \$1 per one thousand feet. A simple explanation should make it possible for the man of the house, at least, to reckon average cost. We say man because it's sometimes difficult to teach even domestic science students to read meters and compute cost, and men as a class are used to counting the cost.

Electricity is sold by the 1000-watt hour—called kilowatt. The charge made by the electric light companies for a kilowatt varies from 5 cents per 1000-watt hours to 15 or even 20 cents per 1000-watt hours, the average being from 10 to 15 cents. Now, each cooking article is marked with its volts and amperes, and the

volts multiplied by the amperes gives the watts.

That is, suppose one had a disk or heater marked five amperes, and it was being used on a 100-volt circuit, it would use 500 watts in an hour. Kilowatt means a thousand watts; hence, if the electricity costs 15 cents a kilowatt, the cost of using the heater for one hour is 7½ cents, when used at the highest heat or speed. A chafing dish on at full heat uses 500 watts, but in general chafing dishes are used about 20 or 30 minutes at a time, and the making of a rabbit would cost 2½ cents for the heat consumed. This computation applies to different electrical cooking utensils, and in order to know what it costs to run all or part of the stove, simple addition and multiplication alone are required.

In using the electric stove, if the same amount of care is used as in operating a gas range, the comparative price is as follows: Where electricity costs 5 cents per 1000 watts and gas \$1 per 1000 feet, the cost for the electricity is about two-thirds more than for gas; where the electricity costs 10 cents, it costs three times as much as gas. But this is not all the story; convenience, cleanliness, little heat thrown off and no poisonous products, have to be counted also.

Oddly enough, electricity is frequently available in most remote places, along electric railways, near mines and in small towns where there is no gas plant, so that a country cottage may fit itself up with more modern, scientific and attractive cooking devices than are to be found in many wealthy city homes. But it is to the dweller in the tiny city flat that the electric cooking devices are perhaps the greatest boon. Rogue River Electric Co. offers electric current for electric range sufficient to do cooking for family of six for \$5 per month.

PRECOOLING OF FRUIT.

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packing houses during the day are quickly run into the big plant at Colton and before the sun rises the following morning they are precooled and load and on their way to the markets. The citrus fruit industry in California has grown persistently to a mammoth industry and the expense of this immense plant will not only be profitable to the growers and the railroads, but it will have its effect upon the consumer throughout the United States. The delivery of fruit in the eastern markets in as sound and sweet a condition as when

taken from the trees should prove a great source of satisfaction to all concerned. The Pacific Fruit Express, in erecting and perfecting such a system and method of quickly handling the perishable shipments in California is to be congratulated.

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