1926

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Recommended Citation
Harribine, Grace (1926) "Do You Know Your Gas Stove?," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 6 : No. 6 , Article 5.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol6/iss6/5

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Do You Know Your Gas Stove?

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GAS stoves are often selected and cared for with little thought and care and yet on the stove in many homes depends the good disposition and unimpaired digestion of all its members. Consequently it is quite necessary for the well-being of the family that the person using the stove knows how to buy and use one properly. No wonder it is called the heart of the home!

Perhaps no household device has undergone more radical and glorified reformation than the gas range. The cast-iron type of our grandmother's day, with its jet-black enamel finish, inadequate cooking surface and unreliable heating mechanism is fast becoming extinct. In its place is a stove with simple, smart lines, even, dependable flame, andamel make-up in general that can be kept clean easily and satisfactorily.

Selection

Now, just a few words about the purchase of a range. Decide on the location and the amount of space that can be given to the kitchen before going to the merchant. Direct light from windows should fall on the top burners; for this reason the oven, if a high one, should be on the side opposite the window. It is necessary to know the size of space allowed so that you will not be likely to buy a stove so large that it will project out awkwardly beyond a doorway or into a passageway. The finish of nearly all makes of stoves may be black, black and white, or gray and white. The latter, as you might suppose, is the most expensive finish. Simply bear in mind in the same make of stove and same model, except for the finish, you can get just as good cooking results on a black and white stove as you can on a gray and white; the only difference lies in the appearance.

The Baking Oven

By all means consider the baking oven as to lining, finish, size and height. The latter, of course, is the most expensive finish which is so commonly used is not very permanent because after food has boiled over on it and been cleaned off, the finish is removed as well, thus exposing the metal to rust. Since rust eats the stove metal, try to find time to refinish the oven with aluminum paint. The darkest enamel finish is an excellent one and very easily cleaned. Have you ever stopped to consider how superfluously large some ovens are and how much gas is required to heat them, as well as the amount of heat that radiates? The oven should be large enough, but not too large to meet the needs of the family. As to correct height, just remem-

ber you have only one back, which must last through the rest of your life. The insulated oven is a fine economy in that it not only saves gas, but keeps the kitchen cool in hot weather.

The Oven Heat Control

The thermostat or oven heat control is surely a gift of the gods. It is a device placed on the oven which registers accurately the temperature in the oven, and also keeps it constant. All the operator has to do is to turn the gas cock on full, light the burner, set the control wheel on the outside of the oven to the temperature designated by the recipe. The gas stays on full until the desired temperature is reached, and then checks down automatically to a very tiny flame, by means of the heat control, thus only enough gas flows to keep the temperature constant. When the flame is so decreased it is time to put the food in to cook. The gas cock is used only to light the gas and to turn it off at the end of the cooking process. This heat control adds about ten dollars to the initial cost of the stove, but will readily save its cost the first year in gas consumption, as well as give the user much peace of mind. So many housewives are apt to light the gas too long before using time and before they realize it, the oven is very hot. High temperatures tend toward warping and cracking the stove. The thermostat will prevent temperatures from going any higher than that desired, and in doing so not only conserves less fuel, but prolongs the life of the stove as well. With such an arrangement, too, it is possible to turn out the same type of product an infinite number of times with the same results assured. Oven canning is heaps of fun done in a thermostatically controlled stove. The fruit jars are prepared about the same way as those for cold pack canning, except that they are not filled quite as full, and then put into the oven and sterilized the required length of time. With this sort of control, no longer do you have to stay away from church Sunday morning in order that there be a hot dinner on time for the family. Use the oven like a fireless; the wheel is set at the lowest temperature and the entire dinner of meat, potatoes, vegetables and puddings, may be placed in the oven at once and allowed to remain three, four or five hours, and come out deliciously cooked.

The Broiling Oven

I feel that many of you dislike using your broiling oven for its real purpose because of the task of cleaning a stained burned broiling pan. Have you ever tried using enough water to cover the bottom of the broler? This will catch any fat that may melt off the meat and thus prevent it from catching on fire and burning on the pan. If meat is thoroughly seared on both sides in a broiling oven that has been previously heated for five or ten minutes, there will be no burns from the fat that nothing but fat is lost in the water. Sometimes better results are insured when the oven door is left open during the process.

Top Burners

It is astounding to realize how few homemakers understand the value of the three sizes of burners on a gas stove. The large front and most handy one, which is called the giant burner, should be used only for large pans and kettles that must be evenly heated; the medium-sized one is a convenient size because the average pan fits it, and it uses about half the amount of gas the giant burner does. The simmering burner, which is a very tiny one, usually containing only five holes, is used for simmering, as its name suggests, and uses approximately one-fifth the amount of gas the large one does. Many foods may be put on a large burner until boiling point is reached (Continued on page 996).
Get Acquainted With Your Gas Stove

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and then transferred to the simmerer and the cooking continued. Water never gets any hotter than boiling (212 degrees F.), and for that reason vigorous boiling water does not cook food any more quickly than does slowly boiling water. There is a big difference between using enough gas and using too much.

Care

Pans and utensils will never be blackened if the stove burners are kept clean and properly adjusted. If food boils over and clogs the holes, remove the burners all except one, and put them on to boil in washing soda and water, using one gallon of water to four tablespoons of washing soda, and dry thoroughly before replacing. Now, as to flame, a long, smoky flame is very wasteful, as there is not sufficient air being mixed with the gas for proper combustion; the air shutter just behind the gas cock controls the supply, while a nut in front of it controls the gas supply. A medium blue flame is hotter than a long, yellow one and requires less gas. The ideal flame is one that has a blue cone about one half inch long, one not too pointed or too wavery, and in shape very similar to the end of a small steel knitting needle. It is extremely poor economy to place a makeshift cast iron top on an open burner gas range; it not only wastes gas, but is apt to be a dangerous producer of carbon monoxide thru imperfect combustion. The only safe top is one scientifically constructed by the manufacturers for the stove on which it is to be used, and even though it is a convenience in keeping pans and dishes hot, there is still question as to whether or not it is an economy as far as consumption of gas is concerned. A pilot light to light the upper burner is a handy contrivance which may be turned on and off at random by means of a tiny screw somewhere near the button that, when pressed, does the lighting.

Flue Connection

While it may be preferable to have chimney connection to gas burning apparatus, it is not always possible to have one for a gas range. Without such a connection the fumes from the ovens are apt to penetrate into the kitchen and make the atmosphere somewhat uncomfortable. An appendage which effectively does away with this condition is the consuming flue placed on top of the range where the chimney connection is made. It eliminates the problem of outside air drafts blowing down the chimney and affecting the oven burner flame, and keeps the kitchen free from greasy and sooty particles from the oven burners. The consuming flue resembles a miniature chimney about ten inches long, with a packing inside similar to steel wool.

How to Cut Your Gas Bills

Here are a few suggestions and hints on how to keep your gas bills down.

1. Whenever possible, use the smaller size burners instead of large ones.
2. Remember gas is not any hotter ten minutes after the burner is lighted than at the first instant.
3. Turn out the gas and relight again in event there is an interval when same is not needed. Matches are cheaper than gas.
5. Use oven to capacity. It is not economical to bake one thing at a time.
6. Learn to read your gas meter at the office of the gas company, read it frequently and compute your gas costs.
7. Use triple or double saucepans all over one burner. You can then cook two or three foods for the cost of cooking one.
8. Use an oven thermostat or a thermometer in the oven.
9. Turn flame down after water starts to boil.
10. Don't use gas oven to heat the kitchen.
11. Don't heat a kettle full of water when a quart will do.
12. Don't use the ovens of your gas stove for storage; it rusts them out.
13. Don't expect to use gas economically in an old, worn stove, or with burners out of adjustment.
15. Don't turn the gas part way off at meter. This gives a low pressure and increases length of time necessary for preparing a meal.
16. Use closed vessels.

Nowadays we no longer believe there is nothing new under the sun. "New" is such a counter the sort of word that we must only take it for what it is worth. New facts to some of us are coming out all the while. A modern up-to-date housewife would never say, "What was good enough for my mother is good enough for me," because she realizes that what her mother had was very likely the best science could offer to that generation and that in turn she herself must have the best of this generation. Science is willing to help the homemaker do many of her household tasks in the easiest and best way so that she may have time for other things if only she will accept the assistance.

Now, do you not agree with me when I say that gas stoves are like people in that you have to know them before they can be managed effectively?