What's Cooking?

Cooking Tips

- Always use lids on pans, cover tightly with plastic wrap, or use cooking bags to avoid condensation on the oven glass which blocks the solar radiation.
- Temperature:
  - On a clear and sunny day the oven will heat up to 250ºF or above. On these days you can cook or bake anything.
  - On a partially cloudy day the oven will heat to 200ºF to 250ºF. On these days you can easily cook meats, rice, baked potatoes, and frozen vegetables, but baking is not recommended.
- Adjust your cooking time to account for the lower temperature. A rule of thumb is to figure twice the regular cooking time.
- Use a meat thermometer instead of a timer to determine if the food is done.
- Any conventional recipe that would be suitable for your oven will work in a solar oven, also crock pot recipes are particularly suitable for a solar oven.
- Foods generally use less liquids or cook in their own juices. This produces better tasting and more nutritious food.
- Foods never burn and rarely overcook in a solar oven.
- Foods particularly suited for the classroom include: hot dogs, slice and bake cookies, brownies, rice mixes, cocktail sausages in barbeque sauce, nachos, s'mores,
- Some specific food tips:
  - cook (steam) yellow and green vegetable in dark colored casseroles to prevent discoloration
  - reduce liquids in cake recipes by one half
  - cook foods in their natural state (i.e. potatoes in skins and corn in husks)
  - chewy dessert recipes such as brownies come out better than crispy ones
  - meats cook better if cut into small pieces.

Recipes

Solar S'Mores 1

24 squares from chocolate bars
12 graham crackers, halved
6 large marshmallows

Place 4 squares of chocolate on each of 6 graham crackers, top with marshmallows. Cover with remaining graham cracker squares to form sandwiches. Press to seal. Wrap with foil. Place in oven. Bake until heated and chocolate begins to melt. Serve immediately. Makes six servings.

Solar S'Mores 2

½ cup crunchy peanut butter
12 graham crackers, halved
6 large marshmallows

Spread peanut butter on 6 graham crackers, top with marshmallows and place in oven. Cover with remaining graham cracker squares to form sandwiches. Press to seal. Bake until heated. Serve immediately. Makes six servings.

Banana Boats

6 bananas
chocolate bar squares, kisses, or chocolate chips
marshmallows, large or miniatures

Peel one strip of skin from banana. Remove small amount of banana or cut slit into banana. Place chocolate and marshmallows inside banana. Wrap in foil. Heat until chocolate begins to melt. Serve immediately. Makes six servings.

Backyard Baked Beans

2 slices bacon (optional)
16 oz. can (1¾ cups) baked beans
¼ cup firmly packed brown sugar
1 small onion, chopped
1 teaspoon prepared mustard
1/4 cup catsup
2 Tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

Cut bacon into small pieces. Combine chopped onion and bacon in container with lid. Cook covered until bacon is brown and onion is tender. Add remaining ingredients. Bake covered for one hour or until beans are thickened and heated through. Makes four servings.

Florida Solar Cookies

1 cup flour
½ cup blown sugar, packed
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 cup butter
3/4 cup granola
1 teaspoon vanilla

Mix butter, sugar and vanilla. Add dry ingredients and mix well. Drop spoonfuls of batter onto a disposable aluminum pan. Cover tightly with plastic wrap (tape on the bottom of pan if necessary). Bake until cookies puff up and appear brown. You can test doneness by inserting a toothpick into the center of a cookie. If it comes out clean, the cookie is done.

Newton's Apples

6 baking apples, cored
3 Tablespoons sugar
6 teaspoons butter
1/4 cup raisins
1/3 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1 Tablespoon flour
½ teaspoon cinnamon
1 Tablespoon water

Place apples in a 12 x 8 inch baking dish. Place ½ Tablespoon sugar and 1 teaspoon butter in cavity of each apple. Cover tightly with plastic wrap. Bake 1 hour in solar oven or until apples are tender. Combine brown sugar, flour, cinnamon, raisins and water. Spoon mixture in and over apples. Continue baking uncovered until sauce is thick.