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Praise for solar ovens

BY KRISTI COWLES AND ARTHUR COULTON

This summer for the first time, we invested in a solar oven, and we have been enchanted with the results pretty much every day since. A brief web search found us a non-profit company in Minnesota (www.solarovens.org). Have a look. We admire the fact that they send their ovens to people who spend most of their day hunting for fuel with which to cook their food; sometimes it's even just grass. Can you imagine? Each solar oven sold in North America sends five ovens to third-world countries. These provide fuel, free food and sterilized water.

But back to the food we've been cooking. So far we've cooked brown rice (two hours), vegetables (summer squash, carrots, potatoes, onions, garlic, beets), whole chickens (three hours), chicken breasts, meat loaf, wild Pacific salmon (1-1/4 hours)—to give you a sense of kinds of food. Since we now have two raised bed gardens, Swiss chard, basil, beet greens, and onions all go into our crustless quiches, which we also bake in our solar oven some mornings. Sometimes we have leftovers, which we re-heat as soon as we arise the next morning. They are ready in about an hour. The only thing we've not tried yet is baking sweet breads and cookies. Soon, though. What has also been neat is that we eat our biggest meal late afternoon and have light snacks at night; better for the body and better for sleeping.

The highest temperature the solar oven can achieve is a wee bit over 300 degrees. So cooking in it is obviously slower, but who cares? We're not using energy from the grid! It's a wholesome feeling to go outside, lift the two round, black roasters out of the oven, come inside and feast! It feeds our souls to know that we are being this green, just using the sun—so available every day for at least four to five months per year. As the hours of sunlight diminish, as well as the intensity, it's obvious that food will take longer to bake.

In winter we have a little white wood cook stove, and do pretty much the same in it, both stove top and oven. So really, the only time we'll be cooking using the grid is, well, probably about 10% of the time. Cool, aye? Try it, you'll like it.

PS: By the way, we eat 100% organic—after all, food IS medicine.

PPS: If this article intrigues you, it's a good idea to order your solar oven around March, as they can get backed up in Minnesota now and then. When we called to check on our order, the woman who answered said that talking to us on the phone prevented her from putting in screws. We enjoyed hearing that. She was so patient with us.

Kristi Cowles and Arthur Coulton
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◆ SAMMY'S ◆ OATMEAL COOKIES

This recipe came from an old sailor of the Applegate as told by Charlotte Butcher.

John "Sammy" Smasel served on the USS Arizona alongside Charlotte's father, Carmon Shull, around 1920 and 1921. When Sammy came home to the Applegate, he lived on Highway 238 near the Provolt Church that he attended. Every Thursday was the ladies missionary circle and Sammy made sure that the ladies and kids had all the cookies they could eat. Now Sammy loved coffee and cigarettes and always had both going even while making cookies. After Sammy passed away the ladies tried to make Sammy's cookies like he did, but they never tasted the same. So, they added some strong coffee, but they still were not quite the same. They decided he had a secret ingredient—remember he smoked a lot.

Sammy's Recipe:

- 2 cups of brown sugar (packed)
- 1 cup of shortening
- 2 eggs beaten lightly
- 2 cups of flour
- 1 teaspoon soda
- 2 cups of quick oats or 1 cup of quick oats
- 1/2 cup of chopped nuts
- 1/4 cup of STRONG COFFEE

Dissolve 1 teaspoon baking soda in the coffee.

Mix all ingredients well and drop from a teaspoon onto a greased baking sheet. Bake at 375 degrees until brown for approximately 10-15 minutes.

Now, if you think the secret ingredient is needed, go for it!

Linda Fischer
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