Cooking When the Power Is Out

If SHTF, you're likely not going to be able to use your electric or gas stove to cook with. Don't worry, though – there are many different ways to cook without power. Some methods are great to use inside but others aren't.

You need to be sure that regardless of what method you use, you do it safely. You don't just have to worry about fire, but about fumes as well. Carbon monoxide poisoning will kill you much faster than starvation!

Make sure that if you're cooking inside, you use proper ventilation and safety techniques.

Wood Fire

This is probably the most popular method of cooking without power but it does require a steady supply of wood. Using a wood fire, you can use your Dutch ovens, kettles, or iron skillets to prepare just about anything in a timely manner, just as if you had a stove and an oven.

You can cook with wood over an open fire, in a fireplace or BBQ grill, or in a wood-burning stove.

BBQ Grill

Your BBQ grill is a great tool to use to cook food without power. You can use wood or charcoal and can cook just about anything on it that you can cook on a stove. Some of them are even small enough to take with you if you need to bug out, so you can cook on the fly.

There are also propane grills that would be great for short-term emergencies but you'd need to store a lot of fuel to use it long-term.

Rocket Stove

A rocket stove uses a small wood fire to heat a combustion chamber so that your fuel is used efficiently.

There are four parts to it including the fuel magazine, the chimney, the combustion chamber and the heat exchanger, which transfers the heat to the bottom of the cooking vessel.

It’s a good tool to use at home but it’s not particularly portable.

Volcano Stove

These little stoves are great because they collapse into an easily-portable size and shape and can burn wood, charcoal or propane. They’re extremely efficient, too.

You can cook an entire meal with just a dozen charcoal briquettes. You don’t have much of a surface area though so you can’t cook a lot at one time.

Camp Stoves

These handy-dandy little stoves have been around forever and are easy to carry with you if you use the smaller ones.

Though the use propane, one little 16.4 ounce bottle will burn for about an hour – plenty long enough to cook a meal on. We wouldn't recommend this as a long-term solution because you'd have to stockpile the propane bottles but it would be great if you're prepping for a short-term SHTF scenario.

Solar Ovens

These operate exactly as you'd think from the name: they use solar panels to cook the food without power.

You don't need any other source of fuel so you're not burning through finite resources but it does take a bit longer. The way that it works is that the solar panel traps heat inside your pot, causing it to heat up and cook the food inside of it.

Fondant Sets

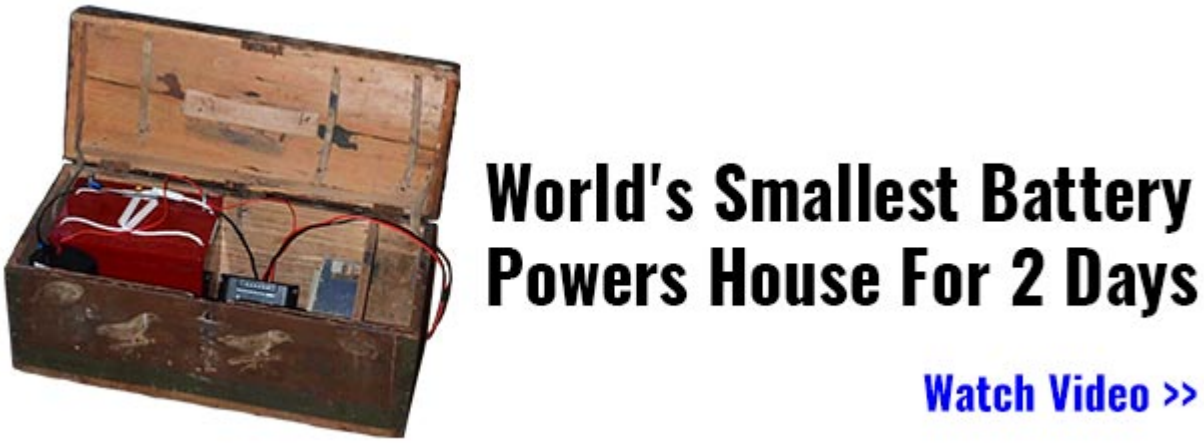
Don't laugh – it works! If you have a fondant set that operates on the little cans of gas, you can effectively heat a meal up with it. You don't have to worry about fumes and the heat source is small.

Just make sure that you don't use it near anything that will catch on fire. Of course, this is definitely not a long-term solution for cooking but it will do in a pinch for a meal or two.

There are many different ways to cook food without power if you get creative – these are just a few of the most common ideas. Basically, if it gets hot, you can use it to prepare food. Just remember to properly ventilate the area where you're cooking.

If you're using an open flame, be sure that the fire is either out, banked, or watched closely when you're finished cooking. To reserve resources, use as little fuel as possible.

If you have other ideas about how to cook without power in a SHTF situation, tell us about it in the comments section below!



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