

PRESSURE COOKERS FOR HEALTHY MEALS – Tasha Killian & Margie Memmott

This article is adapted from an article written in 1999 about pressure cookers, showing you that cooking trends, just like clothing styles, come back around. Collaborating and adding to information shared by the current Southern Region Area Director and former Family and Consumer Sciences faculty member, Margie Memmott, the information shared will be able to help you and your family get excited for the use of pressure cookers in your household, to create healthy and easy meals in a matter of minutes. A pressure cooker performs its magic by cooking foods and liquid in a sealed pot at a temperature slightly higher than boiling. As the steam pressure builds inside the pot, the temperature rises. This intense pressure tenderizes foods and blends flavors quickly. Previously, pressure cookers would be metal pots with lids that locked, knobs that wobbled, etc., making them a little bit scary and contributing to stories of pressure cookers exploding. In the past, lots of supplies were needed such as a specific size depending on what you were going to cook, a timer, a heat diffuser, a wire or metal plate, a steamer basket or rack, etc. If you have a pressure cooker from the past, the good news is, they still work! However, with the advancement of technology, pressure cookers have also advanced and made it so that all those things are built into the pressure cooker.

If you have gotten this far down into this article are you are thinking, wait, what is a pressure cooker, here are some current brands of pressure cookers that might help you out, Instant Pots, Insignia, Power Pressure, etc. There are a lot of brands out there who do pressure cooking. If you haven't seen the new version of a pressure cooker, they look a lot like a crockpot. They plug into an outlet, the timer is built into it, there are settings that exist for preprogramming like soups and stews, meats, and other settings. These pressure cooker settings work for various recipes and various foods. Pressure cookers have become famous not only because they are a great way for cooking, but because they are easy and convenient. One thing that hasn't changed over the past twenty years is the tips for cooking in pressure cookers. Here are tips for cooking in pressure cookers taken from that original article mentioned previously written by Margie Memmott.

Tips:

For safety and to ensure quality results, read the manufacturer's manual completely before cooking.

Purchase (or google recipes) a cookbook specifically for pressure cookers. Familiarize yourself with the terminology and techniques.

Have ingredients prepared. Trim the fat from meat and cut all vegetables the same size. Meat, poultry or fish should be of uniform thickness to ensure even cooking.

Fill the cooker only one third or one half of its total capacity to ensure sufficient room for pressure to build.

Never use less liquid than recommended by the manufacturer. It's okay to use more. Liquids include stocks, broth, juices and tomato sauce. Oil is not considered a liquid.

Follow the manufacturer's directions for securing the cooker lid, developing pressure and maintaining pressure.

Here's one bonus tip to apply to new pressure cookers -

Set timing/ settings based on the recipe and then remember to follow the release instructions for

the dish.

You can see by this article that pressure cooking has always been a quick and easy way to cook meals and it has advanced over the years as technology has advanced so has the method.