



Pressure Cooking

BY GARY LOCHTE



I was craving my “famous” pinto beans. I say “famous” because I’ve cooked them for our Boy Scout fundraiser the past 15 years. People tell me they are the best! Preparing pinto beans can be an 8-hour affair. It was already 7pm and I wanted to eat by 8. Because I previously outlawed the use of microwaves in my home, I thought..... Pressure Cooker!

After reading instructions I gathered ingredients including my “secret” seasoning, and added enough water to fill the cooker half way. Verifying the pressure release nozzle was clear, I secured the lid then set the heat on “medium” per the instructions.

Approximately 30 minutes later I turned off the heat, allowed the steam vent to collapse, opened the lid, and to my amazement, discovered multiple servings of terrific pinto beans; perfectly cooked with great texture and taste. Rice cooks wonderfully in 5 minutes. Pot roast is perfectly prepared in 35 minutes. About every meal you can think of may be prepared in minutes, not hours. Pressure Cooking is an art you may learn quickly with minimum errors.

The pressure cooker has been around since the 1600’s when introduced by the French physicist and mathematician Denis Papin (1647-1712). Over the next 400 years, the design of these cookers greatly improved. The first US Patent for the pressure cooker was granted in 1902.

In 1938 Alfred Vischler patented his “Flex-Seal Speed Cooker” introducing it at a New York City trade show, proclaiming it the very first pressure saucepan for preparing meals, not just canning.

The “Victory Gardens” of the war-torn 1940’s encouraged Americans to grow their own food and safely preserve them by canning via the pressure cooker.

Between wars, prosperity and innovation

brought new inventions to the average housewife. The microwave oven, used extensively in German POW camps, became available in commercial markets. Modern women, finding it necessary to work to help with household incomes, became tempted with more and more “alleged” kitchen time-savers. Consequently, the pressure cooker became a relic. Today, many families have never used a pressure cooker, having succumbed to the seductive marketing of modern cooking gadgetry.

Preparing food with the pressure cooker saves time, protects the nutritional quality of most foods, and preserves precious enzymes which aid in digestion and assimilation of the food’s natural vitamins and minerals.

In addition to seeking less toxic, better quality organic foods, and concentrating on quality nutritional supplementation, many would be well served to learn and perfect the art of pressure cooking. You’ll be rewarded with great tasting nutritious meals prepared in a fraction of the time, and save money thru lower consumption of energy.

High quality stainless steel and aluminum pressure cookers may be purchased on-line, and at many retailers. You can find good pressure cookers at garage sales for pennies on the dollar. When purchasing a used one, be sure to inspect the rubber gasket-seals to validate they are soft and pliable and without tears. Replacement seals and owner instruction manuals are available from many on-line retailers.

