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Cooking up holiday energy savings

By Anne Prince,

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

For many of us, the best holidays involve home-cooked meals and wonderful aromas of turkey, stuffing and baked goods wafting throughout the house. It means a busy kitchen and a bustling house full of family and friends. If this rings true for you, despite the increased kitchen activity, you still have an opportunity to save energy during the holidays.

Cut carbs (carbon) painlessly

In addition to being the "heart of your home," your kitchen could pump savings back into your wallet. According to the Department of Energy, cooking accounts for 4.5 percent of total energy use in U.S. homes. This number, combined with the energy use associated with refrigeration, dishwashing and hot water heating means that as much as 15 percent of the energy in the average American home is used in the kitchen. So, saving energy here can have a significant impact on your household budget.

For example, when preparing side dishes, baked goods, soups and such, consider using small appliances like a crock pot, toaster oven, microwave or warming plate instead of your conventional oven or stovetop. These small appliances are a smart, energy-saving alternative, typically using about half the energy of a stove.

Seal in efficiency

When using your oven, don't peek! Opening the oven door can lower the temperature by as much as 25 degrees and causes your stove to work harder (consuming more energy) to return to the desired cooking temperature. If your recipe calls for baking the dish more than an hour, it is not necessary to preheat the oven. If your oven is electric, you can likely turn the oven off for the last five to ten minutes of cooking and allow the residual heat to complete the job. Clean burners and reflectors increase efficiency and offer better heating, so don't neglect this small but important task. Just as keeping the oven door closed seals in efficiency and enables the stove to operate more economically, the same rules apply to the refrigerator and freezer. Keep the doors closed as much as possible so cold air doesn't escape. However, leaving the door open for a longer period of time while you load groceries or remove items you need is more efficient than opening and closing it several times.

If you are entertaining a large group, you may be able to give your furnace a brief holiday. When your oven is working hard and you have a house full of guests, the heat from the stove and the guests will keep your house comfortable, enabling you to turn down the thermostat.

Clean up with energy savings

When it's time to clean up, extend fellowship to the kitchen, and wash and dry dirty dishes by hand. This uses less energy than a dishwasher. However, don't leave the water running continuously,

or you will waste energy. If you do use the dishwasher and rinse dishes before loading them, use cold water. Run the dishwasher with full loads only, and if possible, use the energy-saving cycle. Note that dishwashers that have overnight or air power dry settings can save up to 10 percent of your dishwashing energy costs.

By adapting these efficient practices in your kitchen, energy savings will be one more thing to be thankful for this holiday season.

Visit colquittemc.com for 2015 Annual Meeting highlights Look for more details in the December NewsLine **ATTENTION:** Use firebreaks around any utility poles on land that will be burned under controlled conditions. By using a firebreak to protect utility poles, you can help Colquitt EMC save thousands of dollars in repair costs. Also, you can avoid potential safety problems resulting from burned poles.

-Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

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Last, but not least, don't forget to look for ENERGY STAR certified decorative light strings this holiday season. They use 65% less energy than conventional models and can last up to 10 times longer.



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Colquitt E/NC offices will be closed Thursday, November 26th and Friday, November 27th



Our offices will be closed Thursday, December 24 Friday, December 25 & Friday, January 1





Thanksgiving Cheese Ball

Servings: 8

- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 4 ounces sharp cheddar cheese
- 2 ounces blue cheese, crumbled 2 tablespoons onions, grated
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 4 dashes Worcestershire sauce
- 1 (2 1/4 ounce) can green olives
- 1/2 cup pecans, chopped small

DIRECTIONS

In a food processor, mix the cream cheese, Cheddar cheese, blue cheese, onion, garlic, and Worcestershire sauce. Process until well blended. Add olives, and pulse into small chunks.

Shape the mixture into a ball, and roll in the chopped pecans to coat. Wrap in plastic, and chill at least 4 hours in the refrigerator.

Per Serving: 239.7 Calories, 22.6g Fat, 404mg Sodium, 51.5mg Cholesterol, 3.1g Carbohydrate.

(Cut Here) 🐣



Easy Pumpkin Pudding or Pie

Servings: 4-6

- 1 cup canned pumpkin
 - 2/3 cup milk
 - 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
 - 1/8 teaspoon ginger
 - 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg 1 (3 1/2 ounce) pkg. vanilla instant pudding mix
- or 1 (3 1/2 ounce) pkg. instant butterscotch pudding mix
- Whipped Topping (optional) graham cracker crust (for pie) (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients in mixing bowl. Beat with wire whisk or spoon for 30 seconds. Refrigerate for 2 hours, then serve as pudding or use for pie filling. Top with Cool Whip at serving time.

Per Serving: 141 Calories, 1.8g Fat, 524.6mg Sodium, 5.7mg Cholesterol, 30g Carbohydrate.