

Are Crock Pots the Most Energy Efficient Way to Cook?

Compared to an electric oven or range, the answer is generally yes. But it gets a little more complicated when you compare crock pots to a gas range or oven. Here's a useful chart from

<http://mindofthemothert.blogspot.com/2011/03/crock-pot-energy-efficient-dream.html>

Cookin' with Electric				
Whatcha Cookin'?	For How Long?	Crock Pot	Electric	Winner?
Roast	1 1/2 hr. Oven, 8 hr. Crock	0.8 kWh	3 kWh	Crock Pot
Quick soup	1 hr. Stove, 8 hr. Crock	0.8 kWh	0.8 kWh	It's a tie!
Slow-simmer recipe	4 hr. Stove, 8 hr. Crock	0.8 kWh	3.2 kWh	Crock Pot
Cookin' with Gas				
Whatcha Cookin'?	For How Long?	Crock Pot	Gas	Winner?
Roast	1 1/2 hr. Oven, 8 hr. Crock	87,000 BTU	173,000 BTU	Crock Pot!
Quick soup	1 hr. Stove, 8 hr. Crock	87,000 BTU	12,071 BTU	Gas Stove
Slow-simmer recipe	4 hr. Stove, 8 hr. Crock	87,000 BTU	48,282 BTU	Gas Stove*
*The slow-simmer recipe would be won by the crockpot if electricity weren't so inefficient!				

Here are some more websites with information about crock pots and energy consumption. Bottom line? You'll need to do the math for your own appliances.

If you're concerned about carbon footprint and cooking, then the equation becomes slightly more complicated. Electricity in Barrow requires use of an inefficient gas or diesel generator, versus say, hydro-electrically generated electricity.

<http://river2sea72.wordpress.com/2007/05/14/crock-of-energy-use/>

<http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20071023062908AANU9pA>

<http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080915074028AAqMyIu>

<http://recipes.howstuffworks.com/try-using-a-crock-pot-for-energy-efficient-cooking.htm>

<http://www.crock-pot.com/hints.aspx>

Are Crock Pots the Cheapest Way to Cook?

Again, that depends on the cost of energy where you live, your particular appliances, and the climate. If you live in a hot climate where you use air conditioning, turning your oven on for 2 hours will require an increase in energy consumption to cool your house to compensate for the extra heat from the oven. But in Barrow, using an oven can decrease the energy needed to heat your house. Here's a little Barrow Crockpot Math.

Price of electricity from BUECI bill for January 2012 : 1 kWh costs \$0.11

Price of gas from BUECI bill for January 2012: 1 CCF costs \$0.32

Conversion to common units: 1 CCF (100 cubic feet of gas) = 29.3 kWh = 1 therm = 100,000 Btu

Price of one kWh of gas: \$0.32 / 29.3 = \$0.0035

Price of one Btu of gas: \$0.32 / 100,000 = \$0.0000032

The roast from the example would cost 0.8 x \$0.11 = \$0.088 to cook in the electric crock pot in Barrow. In an electric oven, it would cost 3 x \$0.11 = \$0.33. In a gas oven it would cost 173,000 x \$0.0000032 = \$0.55.

6 Reasons to use a Slow Cooker or Crock Pot

From <http://www.squawkfox.com/2009/03/14/6-reasons-to-use-a-slow-cooker-or-crock-pot/>

Looking for a fun way to make cheap and healthy family meals for less moolah? Then look no further than your handy slow cooker or crock pot! Slow cookers are frugal to [buy](#), cheap to operate, and can turn inexpensive cuts of meat or low cost vegetarian dishes into delicious family meals with just the flip of a switch.

Slow cookers and crock pots have been around for decades. I remember my mom cooking with her crock pot back in the 1970s. Yes, I was a wee child back when bell bottoms were “far out, man!” Anyboogie nights, today’s slow cookers differ from their groovy ancestors since they boast modern clean looks and digital features. Many come with handy timers, attractive stoneware serving crocks, and can be easily cleaned.

So if you’re looking to “get down” with the humble crock, **here are 6 reasons to slow down and make more meals with your slow cooker!**

1. Cost

Buying, operating, and cooking with a slow cooker is very frugal. Slow cookers cost around \$30 to \$100 to [buy](#) and can save you hundreds over purchasing fancy countertop convection toaster ovens and broilers.

Slow cookers can also cut your grocery bill significantly by allowing you to buy cheaper cuts of meat and tenderizing them over low heat for a longer time. I’ve saved over 50% (hundreds of dollars a year) on beef and chicken by purchasing lesser cuts and slow cooking them into tasty soups and stews. Vegetarians can also cut their grocery bills by using a slow cooker to soak and cook [dried beans](#) – saving around 60% over buying canned beans.

Cooking with a crock [can be] also very inexpensive when compared to the costs of running an oven. Using my [Kill A Watt](#) power meter, I’ve found that a crock pot consumes around 250 watts of power while an [electric] oven can draw up to 4000 watts – depending on how you’re cooking. This means that using a conventional electric oven for one hour can cost around 20 cents while operating a crock pot for 7 hours costs only 10 cents – an energy savings of 50%.

Lastly, there are big bucks to be saved by using your slow cooker leftovers for lunch or remixing them into a second family meal. How’s that for [frugalicious](#) food!

2. Healthy

There’s something just so wholesome and healthy about homemade soups, stews, oatmeal, and other slow cooked family meals. Slow cooked recipes rarely call for added oils or fats since they use water and time to cook the food. So as long as you trim the fat from your lesser cuts of meat, you’re serving a lower fat meal than those prepared through frying or offered at restaurants. Sure beats ordering greasy (and expensive) takeout!

3. Cooking is Easy

Cooking the slow way using a crock pot is very easy to do – just layer your food into the crock, set it and forget it! It’s seriously that easy. I set up my slow cooker in the morning before heading off to work and when I come home dinner is done and ready to serve. Besides, most slow cooker recipes are not intricate to prepare and require zero culinary skills to master.

4. Clean Up is Easy

Slow cookers and crock pots allow you to cook an entire family meal in one dish – the crock. There is little fuss and no mess to clean up afterwards. So spend more time with your family or friends and less time with dish pan hands after each meal.

If your slow cooker has a removable crock then cleaning up is just that much easier – just place the crock in the sink for a good soak and wipe clean. Removable crocks or inserts also cut down on clean ups by allowing you to serve a meal in the crock itself and store leftovers in the refrigerator – this is single dish cooking, serving, and storing at its best.

5. Meals are Tasty

Slow cookers are all about dishing out delicious comfort foods for families – meals like crock pot macaroni and cheese, slow cooker beef stew, or even award winning crock pot chili. Crockers improve the flavor of a meal by taking less desirable cuts of meat or simple beans, and turning them into tasty meals by simmering in low heat and cooking over several hours. My “better half” also loves tender veggies infused with spices and flavors.

6. Saves Time

Along with saving big bucks, slow cookers save you lots of time because they allow you to cook hands (and eyes) free. Once you’ve got your food prepared and placed in the crock, you don’t have to stand around stirring and monitoring it. Cooking in a crock pot is not like preparing food in an oven or on a stove because there’s no boiling over or burning. You just don’t have to babysit your meal as it cooks. Who knew that cooking slowly could save you so much time. Besides, what would you rather do – spend more time slaving over a stove or going outside to play with your kids?

So if you’re into easy cooking methods, single pot cleanup, and cutting your food and energy costs with low heat cooking, then maybe it’s time to dust off your retro 1970s slow cooker and flip the switch on big savings!