

# Cooking on the Rocket Stove

*Rocket Stoves for cooking, using the same basic principles described in this book, are used worldwide, particularly in places where firewood is scarce and the cooking is done inside, necessitating a smoke-free, highly efficient stove. This book mostly covers stoves to heat people, with a few cooking options. The world wide web contains a lot of information on Rocket Stoves including lively and timely discussions, research findings and instructions on how to build a number of different designs. Simply feed the string "Rocket Stove" into your favorite search engine.*



Photo: Flemming Abrahamsson

*Tiny Rocket Stove for making coffee in Flemming Abrahamsson's office (see section drawing, page 75).*

Once you have a functioning stove in your house, you'll probably find unexpected uses for it. Calleigh Ferrara gave birth to her baby on their new Rocket fired cob bench (see Case Studies).

You can use the top of the barrel as a food dryer, using the gentle residual heat after the fire dies down. It's easy to dry things like seeds and sliced vegetables overnight this way. And of course, there's cooking.

If your choice is to have primarily a cooking stove, there's a compromise. More heat to the cooking surface means less to other places, and when you're *not* cooking

that extra heat will chiefly heat the space *above* the stove at a loss of radiant heat from the sides and of stored heat in the thermal battery. Otherwise, if you need chiefly a heating stove, the top of the barrel will be most suitable for simmering or keeping things warm. Now you have a slow cooker for beans or soups, or possibly for toasting nuts, sunflower or pumpkin seeds, or foods sliced thinly.

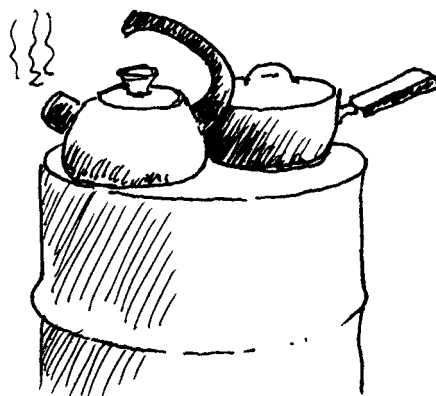
It's also possible to get something boiling on the gas stove, and then put it on the Rocket where it maintains temperature without a vigorous boil. This way you don't

lose volatile oils, and you maintain more flavor and enzymes. My stove is not so good at delivering a fast cup of tea in the morning, or for frying, where you need a much higher temperature, but my own Rocket Stove makes the best toast I've ever tasted.

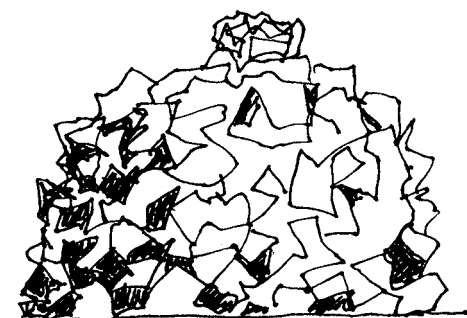
If you keep a teakettle with a quart or so of water in it on top of your stove all of the time, you'll have a source of very hot water. Even when it's not boiling, it will be preheated and much faster to bring to a boil on a gas or electric cooker.

With larger Rocket Stoves—a 30-gallon barrel or bigger—a removable stove top oven can be used for baking. The best trick I know is to buy a \$1.99 roll of lightweight aluminum kitchen foil and carefully wrap it around to form a little beehive with several thicknesses of foil, shiny face in, to reflect the radiant heat inwards. Tuck the end of the roll over the edge and crimp it together with your hand, then crimp a loose handle at the top. You have an instant oven that will bake good bread, but be sure to support the bottom of the loaf above the barrel top so it doesn't burn. When not in use the oven can be hung up indoors or outside.

In September/October when there's still a lot of surplus fruit and vegetables available, yet the humidity is up especially at night and the temperatures are dropping, we use our Rocket as both house heater and food dryer. You could set up a multi-rack food dryer with stacked screens that sits on top of the barrel.



Tinker around. Any burning or cooking device needs practice. Can you remember the first time you tried to cook on gas or electricity or a pump-up camping stove? It took time to learn to operate the new machine. So play with your stove a lot. Try improbable things and see what happens. Experiment and let us know the results, you may discover something completely new that nobody had ever thought of. We might put it in the next edition.



*Aluminum foil stovetop oven*

