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MAKE A
HOTBOX

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BACKGROUND

The HOTBOX uses the principle of insulated cooking. If you can keep the heat that is used to cook food, no replacement heat is necessary to complete the cooking process.

The HOTBOX has a wide variety of uses. It is used to cook foods, to transport and continue cooking your food, as a plate-warmer keeping plates perfectly hot in the dining room, the garden or on the beach, it is a cooler box which is ideal for keeping drinks ice cold and storing ice, an incubation chamber for the making of foods like yoghurt and breads.

The cooking time for different foods varies from 20 minutes (whole rolled oats) to 12 hours (oxtail). Foods mostly cook just slightly longer than normal.

If you used the HOTBOX only 5 times per week, your household would save 119kg of CO_2 per year. If 500 000 households did that, it amounts to more than 60 000 tons of CO_2 per year. At least 70-80% of cooking time is saved and therefore the use of valuable resources such as electricity, gas, wood, paraffin, money and time is drastically reduced.

And, yes it really cooks your food! To truly benefit from the HOTBOX, a subtle shift in thinking is required but once you see the incredible benefits you will never look back. It cooks your food and keeps it piping hot. The more you incorporate it into your daily life, the more you will find you use it.

This 'How To' was compiled by Hazel Lake.

Making a HOTBOX

You will need:
- 2.5m durable (strong) fabric
- tiny polystyrene bits (to fill the HOTBOX, about a black bag full. You can break up polystyrene trays, but they must be tiny)
- 3m of draw string
- Sewing machine if possible

Step 1: Fold your 2.5m material into a square. Cut off excess (to be used later for your lid cushion).

Step 2: Cut 2 big circles approx 112cm in diameter for the hotbox.

Step 3: Cut 2 small circles approx 38cm in diameter for the lid.

Step 4: Put right sides together and stitch both large circles together – leave a gap of 30cm (to put the filling in).

Step 5: Put right sides together and stitch both small circles together (leave a 12cm gap to put the filling in).

Step 6: Find centre of large circle and stitch a 40cm circle in the middle leaving an opening of about 12cm. Stuff with tiny polystyrene bits. Close by machine. This forms the bottom of your hotbox.

Step 7: Mark out 10 sections using the wedge pattern radiating from the centre circle.

Not to scale

Step 8: Stitch to approximately 12cm from outer edge.

Step 9: Stuff each section with polystyrene equally.

Step 10: Stitch around extreme outer edge of circle leaving a 2cm opening.

Step 11: Stitch again around outer edge of circle 3cm in from outer edge forming a channel for the draw string.

Step 12: Feed 3m draw string into the channel with a large safety pin all the way round. Pull up tight.