

# ALL ABOUT PRESSURE COOKING

Vicki Hayman, Community Vitality and Health Educator

University of Wyoming Extension

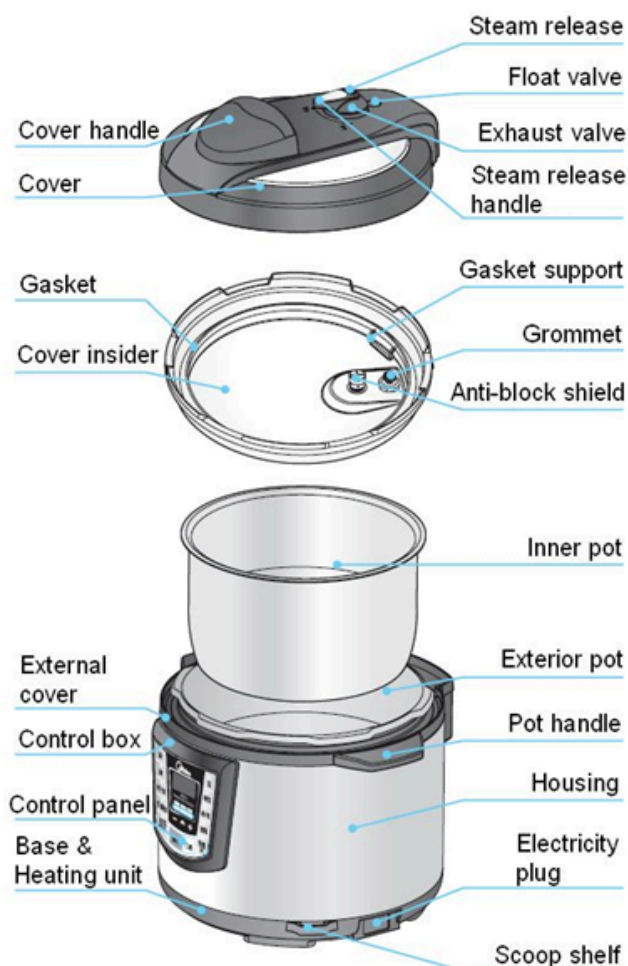


Electric pressure cookers cook food quickly through a combination of high pressure and heat. Programs and multicook functions make these appliances versatile and convenient. Some electric pressure cookers have settings allowing for more than pressure cooking, including sautéing, steaming, and slow cooking.

## Capacity

Electric pressure cookers are often measured in quarts. Smaller 3- and 4-quart cookers are good for small households of one or two people. Larger 6-quart cookers are suitable for families of four to six people. Some brands sell very large 10- and 12-quart cookers.

## Electric Pressure Cooker Parts Diagram



## Safe Internal Temperatures

Although the electric pressure cooker reaches temperatures of up to 240°F, the temperature inside your food is still important to consider. You can still risk foodborne illness if you don't reach the proper internal temperature of fish, meats, and eggs cooked in an electric pressure cooker. Be sure you know the recommended internal temperature for the food you're preparing and measure the internal temperature using an instant-read thermometer.

Food Items	Safe Internal Temperatures
Fish	145°F
Roasts, Steaks, Chops	145°F
Ground Meats	160°F
Egg Dishes	160°F
Poultry, Whole or Ground	165°F
Casseroles	165°F
Leftovers	165°F

## Foods That Cook Well

Foods that use water or absorb moisture as part of cooking are candidates for electric pressure cookers. This can include:

- Grains like oatmeal, rice, pasta, or quinoa.
- Beans, on their own or as part of recipes like soup or chili.
- Animal proteins, like eggs, meat, poultry, and fish.
- Some fruits and vegetables.
- Desserts.

## Tips for Beginners

- Read the appliance manual before operating it for the first time. Learn about the settings and how to use them.
- If using it for the first time, practice with water to get more comfortable with the appliance.
- The sealing rings may take on the flavors of the prepared food, so use separate rings for strong- and mild-flavored foods.
- Most of the appliance's exterior does not heat up during cooking, yet any metal parts of the lid can become hot, so avoid touching the lid during cooking.
- Be sure not to overfill the pressure cooker's insert. Don't fill past the max line inside the pot and don't fill more than halfway with starchy ingredients like beans and rice.
- Use plenty of liquid because the unit cooks with steam.
- Meats tend to cook quicker with better results if cut into smaller, uniform pieces, rather than cooking one large piece.
- You can cook frozen foods in your electric pressure cooker! The cooker will take longer to come up to pressure, but the cooking time remains the same.
- Thicken after cooking because adding a thickener, such as flour or cornstarch, during the pressure-cooking process will interfere with the steam, and the degree of thickening will be hard to control.
- Use caution with dairy and cheese (unless making yogurt). Add milk and cheese after the pressure-cooking process.
- A quick release will produce a large volume of steam, so position the vent so it isn't underneath cabinets or near walls. Keep hands away from the steam.
- All parts of your electric pressure cooker are dishwasher-safe, so you can disassemble the lid and thoroughly clean it. Silicone parts can trap strong smells, so be sure to clean them often and let them dry before storing.

- Food should not be placed into your pressure cooker and programmed to be cooked later. This increases bacterial growth, creating potentially dangerous levels of bacteria that can cause a foodborne illness.
- Adjustments for altitude may be required. At or above 2,000 feet, you need to add time to compensate for the thinner atmosphere. Consult your appliances's guide to see how much time to add.

**Increases in Cooking Times and Liquids at High Altitudes**

<i>Elevation</i>	<i>Increase cooking time, per 20 min.</i>	<i>Increase liquid, per 16 oz.</i>
3,000 Feet	5% or 1 minute	1 Tablespoon
4,000 Feet	10% or 2 minutes	1 ½ Tablespoon
5,000 Feet	15% or 3 minutes	2 Tablespoons or 1/8 cup
6,000 Feet	20% or 4 minutes	3 Tablespoons
7,000 Feet	25% or 5 minutes	4 Tablespoons or 1/4 cup
8,000 Feet	30% or 6 minutes	5 Tablespoons

## Canning Isn't Recommended!

Despite what the appliance's manual may say, canning in these appliances is not recommended. USDA does not have recommended processes for canning in a small pressure cooker.

Electric pressure cookers are also not big enough to maintain a proper amount of heat to safely process jars. The USDA recommends using a pressure canner no smaller than one that can fit at least four quart-sized jars inside. Even the biggest electric pressure cooker doesn't meet these requirements.

## Appliance Safety

- Tilt the lid away from yourself and others when opening the cooker at the end of the cooking time.
- Use long-handled tongs or spoons to avoid burns to your arms and hands.
- Use silicone mitts or water-resistant hot pads to handle the hot and moist inner pot.
- Don't deep-fat fry in an electric pressure cooker.
- Don't overfill the pot with food and/or liquid. There are two max fill lines on most pot liners:
  - The bottom 1/2 max fill line is for rice, beans, grains, dried vegetables, and cooking liquids.
  - The upper 2/3 max fill line is for other types of food and their cooking liquids.
- Don't cook with less than 1 cup of liquid unless foods have a high water content. Liquid is needed to produce steam and to prevent burnt food.

## Converting Recipes

Recipes cooked in slow cookers convert well to electric pressure cookers. Also, ensure the recipe you want to convert has enough liquid, so your electric pressure cooker functions properly. Every brand of appliance is slightly different; try this conversion:

Slow cooker on low for 8 hours or high for 4 hours = electric pressure cooker at 25-30 minutes.

## Care and Cleaning

- Before cleaning, unplug and let the appliance cool.
- Wash the inner pot after each use by hand or in the dishwasher. Avoid abrasive cleaning materials on pots with non-stick coatings.
- Wash the ring after each use by hand or in the dishwasher.

- Wipe both the inside and outside of the cooker with a wet cloth. Use a small brush to get into the small areas.
- Wipe the inside of the lid with a damp cloth.
- Remove and clean around the release valve and steam valve cover. Empty and wash the condensation cup after each use.
- To rid your sealing ring of any foul odors, put 1 cup water, 1 cup vinegar, and a few lemon peels in the inner pot. Run the cooker on the steam setting for 2 minutes and let the pressure release naturally. Take the ring off and let air dry.

## Terms

**Floating valve or pin:** All lids have a valve that seals the lid when the appliance is under pressure and will open when the appliance is depressurized. When it is up, the cooker is fully pressurized, and when it drops, it is no longer pressurized, and the cooker may be opened.

**High pressure (HP):** A pressure setting that is often the default. Most recipes use this setting.

**Low pressure (LP):** Some foods have a better texture when cooked at low pressure, such as vegetables and fish/seafood.

**Natural release (NR or NPR):** When the cooking cycle finishes, the appliance is left to depressurize on its own. A natural release can be combined with a quick release.

**Quick release (QR or QPR):** When the cooking cycle finishes, the release valve on the lid is immediately turned or pushed. This releases all pressure inside the appliance and prevents overcooking of foods. Some recipes use a natural release for a certain number of minutes and follow up with a quick release to release any remaining pressure.

**Pot-in-pot cooking (PIP):** A method of cooking food directly in the serving vessel rather than using the cooker's inner pot. This method can accommodate the layering of containers to cook multiple foods at once or smaller servings.

Compiled by:  
Vicki Hayman  
Community Vitality and Health Educator  
University of Wyoming Extension  
(307)746-3531  
vhayman@uwyo.edu

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