

Cardboard Box Oven

A cardboard box will make an oven -- and it works just as well as your oven at home! There are different ways to make a cardboard box oven.

The Open Top Box Oven

1. Cut off the flaps so that the box has four straight sides and bottom. The bottom of the box will be the top of the oven.
2. Cover the inside of the box completely with foil, placing the shiny side out. The key here is to make sure that there is absolutely NO exposed cardboard inside your box; otherwise your box will ignite.
3. To use the oven, place the pan with food to be baked on a footed grill over the lit charcoal briquettes. The grill should be raised about ten inches above the charcoal. Set the cardboard oven over the food and charcoal. Prop up one end of the oven with a pebble to provide the air charcoal needs to burn - or cut air vents along the lower edge of the oven.

The Copy Paper Box Oven

1. The cardboard boxes that hold reams of paper, letter or legal size, make nice box ovens.
2. Before the boxes are lined, puncture the sides for the grill wires, at about a third of the way down from the top. Leave about 2-3" between wires. Use steel rods or cut coat hangers to make a rack to hold up the cooking pan. The wires are then inserted through the pre-punched holes after the box is lined with aluminum foil. Bend the wires or rods over at each end.
3. Line the inside of the box and lid with aluminum foil (reflective side out). Use a sponge to dab some Elmer's glue around the inside and cover to hold the foil in place. Make a couple holes in the cover to let the combustion gases out. At this point, cut ventilation holes at the bottom-middle of each of the four sides (triangular and about 1.5" high and across the base) to let oxygen in.
4. Place an inverted pie tin in the bottom and then another pie tin (right side up) on top. This is where your charcoal goes. It is important to have the inverted pie tin in order to insulate the bottom of the box from the charcoal.
5. Put several lit briquettes on the pie pan, put your cooking pan on the rack, and place the cover on top. The first time you use this box oven, check it a few times to make sure that enough oxygen is getting in, and enough gases are escaping, to keep the charcoal burning.

Another Box Oven

You will need:

One large box (whiskey or any double corrugated box that will fit a cake pan or cookie sheet with about 1" of space all around.) **Note:** this does not have to have a lid or top.

High quality, heavy duty, aluminum foil.

4 small soup cans

A 9x13 cake pan or small cookie sheet

One #10 can, open at both ends and vented at bottom for charcoal chimney.

One small stone to vent bottom

1. Cover the inside of box with two layers of foil (reflective side out). Be sure there is no cardboard showing anywhere. Tape it down on the outside.
2. Place a large sheet of foil on a level piece of ground from which combustibles have been removed.
3. Put the charcoal chimney on the foil and place a fire starter and whole charcoals (one for every 40 degrees of temperature plus one or two for cold, wet, or windy weather) Light the chimney and wait about 20 minutes for charcoal to be ready. Pull off chimney and spread out charcoal to fit under pan used.
4. Place four pop cans to support cake pan and lower box oven over all.
5. Vent on the leeward side (that's away from the wind for non mariners) with a small stone.
6. Cook for amount of time called for in recipe. If cooking for much more than 30 minutes replenish charcoal. **Note:** Be sure and lift box straight up or you will "dump" the heat. No peeking allowed!

For All Box Ovens:

1. Use heavy duty aluminum foil when constructing box ovens making sure no cardboard is exposed to the heat source (or your box will burn). All tape must be on the outside of the box.
2. Control the baking temperature of the oven by the number of charcoal briquettes used. Each briquette supplies 40 degrees of heat (i.e. a 360 degree temperature will take 9 briquettes).
3. Experiment!
 - a. Build an oven to fit your pans - or your menu.
 - b. Construct a removable oven top or oven door.
 - c. Use an oven bag (the type used to roast turkeys) to create a window in the side or top of the box in order to keep the kids from opening the door or lifting the lid.
 - d. Try the oven over the coals of a campfire.
 - e. You can cook anything in a box oven that you cook in a regular oven. Bake bread, brownies, pizza, and coffee cake or roast a chicken.

