

TIPS: Cooking Without Electricity

Good morning. Good morning. Hope you're doing well. This is Sam and Ellie, and welcome to *Sunday Snacks*.

Sam: So today what we want to talk to you about is the art of cooking without electricity or gas or whatever your house uses normally, if you don't have a power outage or anything bonkers happens.

One of the things I know I have on hand is multiple different types of stoves. And that's, I think probably just because of my camping stuff.

Ellie: Why are they multiple different types?

Sam: I have a small single-burner stove that we can take backpacking. Again, my daughter and I with Scouts are supposed to, at some point, go on the Appalachian trail. And that was one of the big things that we both had to get in order to be ready to go on that.

Ellie: Awesome.

Sam: And I didn't know that they were thinking literally until I was told, "guess what? You're going on the Appalachian trail for a couple of days."

And I'm like, so how does one eat on that? And they're like, do your research. I'm like, oh, okay. So I had to learn that the hard way. I have a good friend that has done a ton of hiking who enlightened me on how to do that. And she was amazing. She went through the whole process with me and finding some good ones.

Then the second one is a two-burner Coleman stove that just uses propane, which is super easy to use. Really, really simple. Just don't do what I did and set the can up in the wrong direction because it will freeze.

Had an off day. Hadn't had my coffee yet that morning and it was a cold day camping.

Ellie: At least you didn't lose your eyebrows.

Sam: I didn't lose my eyebrows. I just froze the line. Yeah, it was not pretty.

The third stove, if you want to call it that way, I have is a grill, a gas grill.

That's I think it's three. I mean, it's the equivalency of three lines of fire and then I have an off shoot for a pot. Cool. So I have that kind of grill.

My neighbors always are adamant about the fact that I need a little charcoal grill and they are a hundred percent right.

Because I definitely do think I should just invest in a small tailgate grill, but the reason I haven't done that is because I have my fire ring in my backyard and I have a grate that I use that I put on top of cinder blocks, not - sort of like bricks in there and I use those to hold the grates for cooking on above the fire. Yeah. So that's what I have on hand. God forbid, I'm out of gas, electricity.

Ellie: Actually, if you have charcoal, you can throw that on there. Same concept without trying to find wood all the time for your fire pit, you know, so that actually you wouldn't need the grill. You just need a bag of charcoal, which helps extend that fire if you don't have enough.

Sam: And I always forget that. I can always use charcoal in my fire ring. Mainly just because I then tend to use the ash from my wood fires in my chicken coop to help deodorize everything. So, I think that's where I always forget that I could do that (use charcoal). I could do that. It's very easy, but then I can't put that ash in my chicken coop because that would cause all sorts of problems.

Ellie: Yeah. And I got a small charcoal grill last year – **Sam:** For tailgating? **Ellie:** For sidewalk eating. Just so I would have something if the electric went out because I'm all electric here. I could cook a burger, hot dogs, you know, some-mores... Always lovely.

Keep in mind, none of these things should be used indoors, please, unless you have a fireplace and it's clean and you've used it before.

Sam: Yeah. The big thing that I really want to stress on that one is exactly what Ellie said. Some people have decorative fireplaces at home and they think that they have an actual chimney affiliated with them. Well, they may or may not. You need to know those kinds of things about your home before the crap hits the fan people.

The big thing that I would say is growing up, we had a coal and wood burning stove, and one of the things I learned moving from the city where I was entirely on PNL gas heat in Philadelphia to having my own coal or wood-burning, was that you have to clean the chimney regularly.

I mean, think Mary Poppins, people! There was a reason they had chimney sweeps. Those kind of aspects of safety and of managing a crap-hits-the-fan situation is really crucial because you don't want to accidentally set yourself ablaze, set your house ablaze, and then cause even more problems for your family.

I know at the holidays here, we've seen just since we've moved here in 2006, we've seen at least five to 10 homes go up in flames from a generator situation where somebody has put it inside their house or inside their garage. And it, it doesn't end pretty.

Ellie: Well. And you can be asphyxiated.

Sam: You can carbon monoxide poisoning inside your house. Yeah.

Ellie: You don't even know it until you're gone. So yeah, all of that should be outdoors

Sam: And just be safe with it and always know how to use it prior to a negative situation.

Ellie: Right. Practice just as a family or on your own, just try lighting your gas grill. I mean, I know that my old gas grill's ornery as all get out and I would have to use a lighter to light it because the switch wouldn't kick on.

Ellie: And again, that's one of those things you don't want to wait until the storm is coming to go buy the propane for your gas stove or whatever, because it's probably going to be out of stock.

Ellie: So those are the kinds of things you can always have on hand. Like we always have a gas can. And one of the things that I've thought about having on hand more is to have a secondary propane tank.

As one empties, you've one left.

Ellie: Yeah. Not down to the end and run out and buy.

Yeah. All of those are important things. Just trying to figure out ways, you can go online, and they can show you what Sam and I were talking about it.

She's going to learn it this summer in Scouts, you can take a tin can and make a little stove that will heat coffee or a small pan or whatever.

So there are, there are lots of things to do. Just learn how to do them now. I always say take a weekend and you don't have electric. Then what do we do? Let everybody chip in and learn how to make these things work.

Sam: Okay. It makes it an adventure and makes it fun too, so that when the crap does hit the fan for nothing.

Ellie: Yeah. It doesn't have to be scary then and everybody like hollering at everybody cause nobody knows what to do. Do it like a camping trip, you know? That way you'll also know if everything you need is on hand and that's a great way to test your plan.

Sam: Bingo. And that's the crucial thing because now you'll know for your family, what it looks like, because what Ellie has on hand for a single person versus what I have to have on hand for our family - four person family and a dog and chickens - are very different.

So, taking the time to do that, look around your space, have fun with it. Yeah. And explore what are a variety of options that your family can do in your living situation that is safe and can provide you with a warm meal.

Ellie: Yeah. And if everybody has a task, what happens is not only easier, but it also gives everybody something to do when all the things that they would normally do with electronics and everything isn't working.

That's a great way to keep everybody busy and taking part. Pretty soon you're joking and having a good time with it.

Yeah. Just think of it in terms of three days or a week and what you would need to do. That's a great way to get started and just feel as we say, "...a little more secure and prepared."

Sam: So, here's to being prepared. See you, guys, Bye. Bye.

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