

High-Altitude Cooking

Carrots, potatoes, meat and anything that is boiled, will take much longer to cook at high altitudes.

A pressure cooker is a good solution because it enables you to cook in high-temperature steam. Some pressure cookers are manufactured especially to be used at high altitudes and can be adjusted to operate for maximum efficiency at any height at which you might live.

If you don't have a pressure cooker, cut all foods into small pieces so the heat can penetrate more surfaces faster.

Anything baked will also require a longer time in the oven. Candies and cake frostings cannot be tested by a thermometer up in the mountains. You will have to dribble some syrup into a glass of cold water and discover the proper soft ball stage with your fingers.

Keep an eye on yeast breads at high altitudes. They rise in an astonishingly short time and are ready for the oven long before you expect them to be.

When you are about to bake a cake or cookies, first be sure that the shortening is at room temperature. If you are making a very rich cake, it may help if you reduce the shortening called for in the recipe by at least 15 ml or 30 ml. And it is often wise to use a little less baking soda than you would put in ordinarily. On the other hand, more eggs can be beneficially added to the recipe the higher up you are.

Here is a guide for adjusting your favorite cake recipes to cope with high altitudes. When two amounts are given, use the smallest one first. If the cake is noticeably unsuccessful, use the larger amount the next time.

Some cookbooks have special sections on high altitude cooking. Check with your local library and Agriculture Canada.

Honey

Very useful in countries where the sugar is not sufficiently refined. If you substitute honey for sugar in a cake, for each 200 ml of honey that replaces 250 ml of sugar, omit 60 ml of whatever liquid the recipe calls for.

Humidification

The problem of lack of humidity is encountered most frequently in North Africa and the Middle East. Under ideal conditions, the air inside your home should have a relative humidity of from 35 to 40 per cent.

Air conditioners and desert coolers help humidify in the summer, but any kind of heating system will cause too much dryness during the cold months, especially in a desert area. For a prolonged stay in a dry climate with cold winters, an electric humidifier can be a good investment, particularly if you own a piano or any other valuable musical instrument.

Leather-bound books can be preserved against cracking if you rub them with a little high-grade Vaseline.

Humidity

Here are a few precautions for a moist climate: