

PEGGY'S KITCHEN

Peggy's Power Cut Cookbook

25 old British meals for when the electric goes off, and how to stay safe



Meals for when the lights go out

Safety pages included

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Peggy is an AI-made character. The recipes, prices and history are real.

Prices are rough UK supermarket costs per portion for the ingredients listed, with US dollars at about \$1.33 to the pound. Sides are extra.

Ovens and hobs vary, so use the times as a guide. Make sure meat and fish are cooked right through, and reheat leftovers until piping hot. Check labels for allergens.

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A NOTE FROM PEGGY

Right then, love. Kettle's on.

I boiled it before the power went, and filled the flask while I was at it. You'll see why.

In 1972 the miners' strike put the lights out street by street, and the times were printed in the paper. In 1974 came the three-day week, and the telly went off at half past ten. Our mums lit a candle and carried on cooking on the gas. These days, I'd reach for a torch.

Power cuts still come, mostly with the winter storms. So here are twenty-five proper meals that need no electricity: on one gas ring, from a flask, by a real fire, or with no cooking at all.

Fifteen are from the video and ten are new. Most come straight from the cupboard, and none of them cost much. My generation could feed a family on a tin and a loaf, and so can you.

But read the safety pages first, in daylight, before the night you need them. They matter more than any recipe in here.

Love, Peggy x

Peggy's power cut cupboard

Everything here keeps in a cupboard. Get it in now, and you'll be glad of every bit the night the lights go out.

A TORCH, NOT A CANDLE

A battery or wind-up torch, with spare batteries, is far safer than a candle. A lantern that stands on the table leaves both hands free for cooking.

MATCHES AND A HAND TIN OPENER

Matches for the gas, if your hob's instructions say it can be lit by hand. And a tin opener you turn yourself, or tins with ring-pulls, because an electric opener's no use tonight.

A GOOD FLASK

When a cut's coming, or the night before a planned one, boil the kettle and fill it. For soup, warm the flask with boiling water first, tip it out, then fill it with soup that's steaming hot. Keep the lid on, and never save what's gone lukewarm.

TINS THAT NEED NO COOKING

Soup, beans, corned beef, salmon, pilchards, potatoes, peaches and evaporated milk. Tinned meat and fish are already cooked, so they're safe cold.

LONG-LIFE MILK AND DRY GOODS

Long-life milk, quick oats, instant mash, rice, cocoa, stock cubes, and crackers or oatcakes. And bottled water, in case the taps go off too.

A RADIO, AND THE NUMBERS ON PAPER

A battery or wind-up radio for news. Write 105 and the gas emergency number on paper. If you rely on a landline or a pendant alarm, ask your provider whether it works in a power cut.

SOMETHING WARM

A hot water bottle, a spare blanket, a hat and thick socks. Our mums kept a blanket on the back of the settee all winter, just in case.

**1**

ON ONE GAS RING

Stovies

One gas ring · heavy saucepan with a lid

About 45 minutes

Serves 2

About £2.15 a plate (\$2.90)

YOU NEED

- 600g potatoes (3 big ones)
- 1 onion
- 1 tin corned beef (340g)
- A good knob of dripping or butter (25g)

FROM THE CUPBOARD

A stock cube, salt and plenty of pepper; oatcakes and pickled beetroot on the side, if you have them

METHOD

- 1 Melt the dripping in a heavy saucepan over a low gas. Slice the onion and soften it for 5 minutes.
- 2 Peel the potatoes and cut them into thick slices. Add them with 300ml of water and the stock cube crumbled in.
- 3 Lid on and simmer gently for 25 minutes, stirring now and then, till the potatoes are soft and some have broken down.
- 4 Open the corned beef carefully, as the tin edges are sharp. Break it into chunks and stir it in.
- 5 Cook 5 minutes more, till it's steaming hot right through. Stay with it while the gas is on.

PEGGY'S TIP

No corned beef? Leave it out. Stovies with no meat in are called barfit in Scotland, which means barefoot.

KEEPING IT

No fridge? Don't keep any. Otherwise fridge in 2 hours, eat in 2 days, reheat once till piping hot.

To stove means to stew, in Scots. Stovies were Monday's dinner, made with whatever was left of the Sunday joint.



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THE FLASK AND THE FIRE

Porridge from the Flask

A flask of boiling water

5 minutes

Serves 1

About 10p a bowl (15¢)

YOU NEED

- Half a mug of quick oats (about 40g)
- A flask of water, boiled the night before
- 1 tbsp golden syrup

FROM THE CUPBOARD

A pinch of salt; a splash of long-life milk, if you like

METHOD

- 1 The night before, fill a flask with boiling water, standing it in the sink in case it spills. Screw the lid on tight.
- 2 In the morning, put the oats in a bowl and pour over about twice as much hot water from the flask.
- 3 Stir, put a plate on top and wait 5 minutes, till the oats are soft and thick.
- 4 Stir again, and drizzle with golden syrup.

PEGGY'S TIP

Warm the flask with a little boiling water first and tip it out. It stays hotter for longer.

KEEPING IT

Make it fresh each morning, and eat it while it's warm.

Mornings were the worst bit of a power cut, because the house had been cold all night.