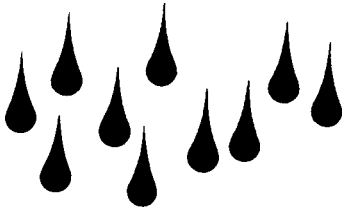


In the Kitchen

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Food preparation

Large quantities of water are often used during the initial preparation of food and for the cleanup. To conserve water, keep these tips in mind:

- Wash raw fruits and vegetables in a bowl or pan of water rather than under running water. The water can be reused to rinse dirty dishes before washing them.
- Allow enough time to defrost frozen foods in the refrigerator rather than under running water.
- Remove ice cube trays a few minutes before you need them, to loosen them at room temperature instead of under the faucet.
- Keep a covered container of drinking water in the refrigerator instead of running the faucet for cool water. Shake the container before serving to incorporate air in water and eliminate "flat" taste.
- Serve drinking water only if people request it.

Water use can be minimized also during other food preparation steps, although the savings will not be as significant. Keep these points in mind:

- Use a minimum amount of water for cooking foods such as frozen vegetables and stews. This will maximize nutritional value as well as save water.
- Cook foods over low heat in covered pans to decrease the rate of moisture loss.
- Cover or wrap foods in aluminum foil during baking to minimize the evaporation of liquid.

- Save leftover vegetable juices for soups, cooking raw or frozen vegetables and stews, and for making gravy. Use leftover fruit juices for drinking and for making gelatin salads.
- Minimize the number of cooking utensils and dishes used to cut down on water needed for dishwashing.

Note

Water should not be conserved at the expense of cleanliness. Before preparing food, it is important to wash hands, clean cutting boards and work surfaces, and wash cooking utensils and dishes.

Dish washing

- Wash dishes in a pan of hot, soapy water and rinse in a second pan of hot water rather than under running water.
- When waiting for tap water to warm, collect cold water for future use. Use a container with a spigot for short-term storage.
- Scrape dishes but don't rinse before loading in your washer, especially when you'll run the washer within a few hours. If rinsing is necessary, catch water in the sink and rinse with it rather than under the running faucet.
- Run only full dishwasher loads.

A relatively small volume of water completes a cycle in dishwashers. Most dishwashers fill with 2 or 3 gallons of water during each cycle. Depending on the cycle you select for washing or rinsing, the dishwasher

fills and drains 4 or 5 times using from 12 to 16 gallons of water during the complete cycle time. This amount of water is continually recirculated through the spray-wash arms and filter system of the appliance to clean the dishes.

Many people find that one running does the day's dishes. This means dirty dishes, glasses, snack plates, pots and pans, and preparation utensils can be put into the dishwasher until there are enough accumulated for a full load.

This reduces the use of water, since less is used to run the dishwasher once a day than would be needed when clutter is washed by hand frequently throughout the day, usually under constantly running water. Many people use more than 15 gallons of water in hand washing dishes for just one meal!

It takes just as much water to run the washer empty as full. Good machine loading practices assure proper circulation of spray for effective cleaning. Look for loading instructions in the use and care manual for your particular model. Improper loading and overloading can cause poor cleaning and dishes may have to be rewashed—which uses more human energy as well as electrical energy and water.

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One portion of the dishwashing task that can be eliminated is the pre-rinse of dishes before loading the machine if you run the dishwasher through a full cycle (a short, water-conserving cycle does not remove food left on dishes). Also, as long as you plan to run the dishwasher relatively soon after loading, you don't have to wash the dishes first. With continued mechanical improvements in machines and technological improvements in detergents, less and less preparation is needed, saving you the extra work and using less water and power to get the job done.

Waste disposal

If you own a waste food disposer, become conscious of the times you run it. Cold water is used in operating a disposer so that fat particles solidify and are chopped and flushed into the sewer system. It is estimated that under normal conditions, the average person uses 1.5 gallons of water per day to operate a disposer.

Remember that waste food disposers are made to operate with the water running. Operating the machine without running water will ruin it. If you are serious about not using water, then dispose of food wastes by other means. Careful planning can help eliminate some of the waste from the start.

One way to simplify cleanup is to peel vegetables, eggs, or other food onto newspaper, wrap the paper

around the food waste, and then dispose of the package in the garbage container. This saves you from scraping peelings out of the sink or off the counter after the preparation job is done. It will save water because you don't have to operate the disposer. This might be a good time to consider starting a compost pile if you have available outdoor space.

Water storage

As an emergency measure, store drinking water for short periods of time. Clean plastic and glass jugs with tight-fitting lids or stoppers are good storage containers. Fruit jars, quart jars, and picnic vacuum jugs are also adequate.

All water stored for later use should be purified first as follows:

Boiling. Boil vigorously for 1 to 3 minutes to destroy bacteria that might be present. Before drinking, pour the boiled water from one clean container to another several times to improve the taste.

Bleach method. Any household bleach solution that contains hypochlorite, a chlorine compound, as its only active ingredient will purify water easily and inexpensively. Bleach solutions with 5.25% of sodium hypochlorite are available in grocery stores.

Add bleach solution to water in any clean container in which it can be thoroughly mixed by stirring or shaking. The following table shows the proper amount to add.

Water purification by bleach method		
Amount of solution to add to:		
Amount of water	Clear water	Cloudy water
1 quart	2 drops	4 drops
1 gallon	8 drops	16 drops
5 gallons	1/2 tsp	1 tsp

Add bleach solution to water and stir, then let the mixture stand for 30 minutes. After this, the water should still have a distinct taste or smell of chlorine. If this taste or smell is not present, add another dose of solution to the water and let the water stand another 15 minutes. Taste or smell of chlorine in the treated water is a sign of safety.

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