

SOFT-SIDED COOLER COOKER

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This is my favorite cooker for a number of reasons:

- I have a lot of different sizes of these coolers so I can make a cooker in the size that fits the number of people I want to feed. That way the pot can be filled with little head space and I don't have a lot of leftovers.
- Because they are soft-sided, it is easy to stuff them with a lot of shredded newspaper to maximize the insulation.
- The materials for making the cooker are very inexpensive. All you need is shredded newspaper (free), two foil solar blankets (cheap) and a hand towel (from your rag bag).
- The coolers have zippered and mess pockets for carrying cooking utensils and even a Stern-o stove for heating the contents of the pan.
- They also have handles for transporting the cooker if needed.



CONSTRUCTION:

- Choose the size of cooler that fits your needs.
- Choose a two handled pan that fits in the cooler with at least three inches of space around it. I prefer an enamel pan because the lid has a handle and the pan has a bucket style handle. They are also well insulated but not heavy and come in a variety of sizes. I use a strap with a buckle to hold the lid in place so the contents don't spill.



- Shred the newspaper using your office shredder. This is the most time consuming part of the project.
- Open two solar blankets and lay them crisscross in the cooler. Only open them to the size that fits the cooler. There will be several layers of foil in each blanket.

- Put 3-5 inches of newspaper in the bottom of the cooler on top of the foil. Place the pan in the middle of the cooler and stuff newspaper tightly around it.
- Fold the hand towel in half and sew up the two sides adjacent to the fold leaving the top open.
- Stuff the towel tightly with newspaper shreds, making a pillow of newspaper.
- Sew the top of the towel closed.
- During the cooking process the steam from the cooker dampens the newspaper if it isn't encased. Using the towel makes it easy to dry the pillow and prevents the newspaper from getting too wet. It also allows you to remove the newspaper on top of the pan without getting newspaper everywhere.
- After heating the contents of the pan, put the pan immediately into the cooler and place the pillow on top.
- Fold the solar blanket over the pillow and zip the cooler closed.

