

# Firehouse Cook Book



A collection of tasty  
recipes & kitchen safety tips  
by Central Fire District  
of Santa Cruz County



# Fire Safety in the Kitchen



**Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries, with more than 49% of all structure fires starting in the kitchen.** In 2021, fire departments in the United States responded to an estimated 170,000 home cooking fires. These fires caused an estimated 135 deaths, 3,000 injuries and over \$494 million in property loss.

This cookbook is a collaborative effort, with recipes from many of our active and retired fire personnel and their families. Along with learning some tasty new recipes, we hope to help you learn about preventing fires and other accidents in the kitchen.

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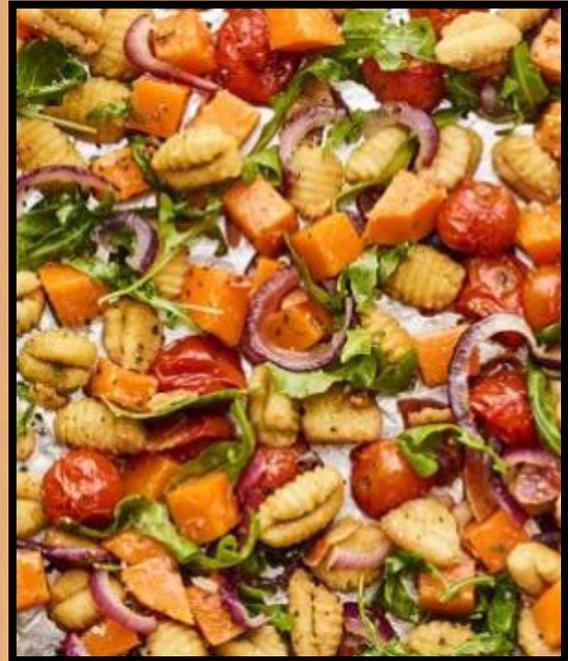
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# Dana's Gnocchi & Pancetta

Firefighter/Paramedic Dana Rayfield

## INGREDIENTS:

- 8 oz. pancetta
- 1 butternut squash, cubed (1" cubes)
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- 1 red onion sliced in half with 1/2" slices
- 16 oz. gnocchi
- 4 cloves garlic crushed
- 4 cups arugula
- 2 tsp chopped fresh rosemary
- 2 tsp chopped fresh sage
- salt & pepper
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup parmesan



## DIRECTIONS:

- Toss all the ingredients except the arugula and parmesan into a bowl. Pour onto foil-lined cookie sheet and place in oven set at 450°F for 25-30 minutes, until tomatoes are blistered in some spots.
- Take out, put into serving bowl and toss in arugula and parmesan with a little drizzle of olive oil. Boom - easy peazey!

## **HOT TIP!**

**NEVER** Leave young children unsupervised when working in the kitchen. Make sure to maintain a minimum 3 foot "Safety Zone" around ovens, stoves, and other hot/hazardous areas to prevent injury.



# Tarragon Lemon Roast Chicken

Battalion Chief Pat Winters

## INGREDIENTS:

### *For Main Dish:*

- 1 Tablespoon kosher salt
- 1 Teaspoon of freshly ground black pepper
- 1 Whole chicken (3.5-4 lbs), giblets discarded
- 1 Tablespoon of melted ghee (or fat of choice)

### *For Tarragon Lemon Pan Sauce:*

- 1 shallot minced
- 1 cup chicken broth or bone broth
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter (or cold ghee)
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh tarragon
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- Freshly ground black pepper

## DIRECTIONS:

- Position your oven rack in the middle position and place a 12" oven-safe skillet on it. Then shut the oven door and turn heat up to 450°F.
- Mix together the salt and pepper in a small bowl.
- Pat the chicken dry with paper towels. Pull off any extra fat around the open cavity and trim away any extraneous skin. Brush the entire surface of the bird with the melted ghee. If your chicken is still cold, the ghee may clump up a bit upon contact with the bird.
- Sprinkle salt/pepper mixture all over the surface and interior of the bird, then massage in seasoning by hand.
- Tuck chicken wings behind the back to keep them from burning in the oven and tie the legs together with a piece of kitchen twine.
- Place your bird breast side up in the hot skillet in the oven (remember that skillet is hot!)
- Roast the chicken until the breast registers 120°F and thighs are 135°F, about 25-35 minutes.
- Turn off oven, leaving the chicken inside for about 25-35 more minutes, and check the temp with a meat thermometer. When the chicken breast reaches 160°F and thighs about 175°F, remove the chicken from the pan and rest it for 20 minutes.
- While the chicken is resting, whip up a quick pan sauce! Remove all but 1 tablespoon of fat from the skillet, and leave the extra jus and brown bits in the pan. Heat the contents of the skillet over a medium-high burner. Once the liquid starts bubbling, throw in the shallots and cook until softened. Pour in the broth and mustard, scraping up any tasty browned bits on the bottom of the pan. Simmer until reduced to about 3/4 cup.
- When the sauce is ready, remove from heat. Then grab the chilled butter or ghee, and slowly whisk it into the sauce, along with the lemon juice and minced tarragon. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.
- Serve up the chicken with the sauce, and enjoy!



## **HOT TIP! Stovetop & Oven Fires**

**Do you know what to do when your oven or stove catches fire?**

**If you have a small grease fire while cooking, don't attempt to pour water on the fire - it can cause the flaming grease to spatter and spread!**

**Instead, follow these directions:**

**FOR STOVETOP FIRES** - Put a lid on it! Smother flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.

**FOR OVEN FIRES** - Turn the oven heat off, and keep the door to the oven closed.

**If you have any doubt about fighting a small fire, just get out! Close the door behind you to help contain the fire, then call 9-1-1 from outside the home, and wait for help to arrive.**



# Steve-O's Steak & 2 Veg

(Retired) Firefighter Steve Vratny

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1/3 tri-tip steak
- 1 small red onion
- 1 bell pepper (yellow or red)
- 1 zucchini
- 1/3 cup white rice
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- dry meat seasoning of choice



## DIRECTIONS:

- Chop the red onion finely. Slice the meat into thin, bite size pieces.
- Combine the meat and onion with the olive oil in a pan on the stovetop on high heat.
- Season the meat with your favorite dry seasoning. (I like sweet mesquite seasoning).
- Start the rice boiling separately (2/1 water to rice ratio).
- Chop bell pepper and zucchini. Once the meat and onions are browned a little, add the other vegetables (or, if the rice is done, you can add the rice first). Either way, the rice will become “dirty rice” from the meat juice. Sometimes, there’s some liquid from the vegetables, the rice will absorb this.
- Stir in the vegetables. Don’t cook too long, just enough so that the vegetables stay crisp.
- Turn off stove, serve and enjoy!

## **HOT TIP!**

**Unattended cooking is the #1 cause of cooking fires (and fire deaths)! Stand by your pan. If you leave the kitchen, turn off the burner.**



# Spicy Coconut Shrimp & Rice

Administrative Analyst Clara Turner

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup rice, rinsed
- 2 cups water
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon minced, fresh ginger root
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 pound uncooked shrimp (approx. 26-30 shrimp, peeled and deveined)
- 2 cups fresh snow peas, trimmed
- 3 tablespoons coconut milk
- 1 tablespoon orange juice
- 1/2 cup sweetened shredded coconut, toasted
- 1/3 cup minced, fresh cilantro



## DIRECTIONS:

- To toast coconut, bake in a shallow pan in a 350°F oven for 5-10 minutes or cook in a skillet over low heat until golden brown, stirring occasionally.
- In a large saucepan, combine rice, water and salt; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, covered, 12-15 minutes or until liquid is absorbed. Remove from heat; fluff with a fork.
- Meanwhile, in a large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion; cook and stir 4-6 minutes or until tender.
- Stir in ginger, curry powder, cumin, salt and cayenne; cook 1 minute longer.
- Add shrimp and snow peas to skillet; cook and stir 3-4 minutes or until shrimp turn pink and snow peas are crisp-tender.
- Stir in coconut milk and orange juice; heat through.
- Serve with rice; top each serving with coconut and cilantro.

## HOT TIP!

**Remember, cooking and clubbing don't mix!  
Both fatigue and alcohol consumption can make  
you more susceptible to injuries during cooking.  
After a long night out, order in!**



# Polenta Pot Pie

Administrative Analyst Clara Turner

## INGREDIENTS:

- 2 1/2 cups chicken broth
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups milk
- 1 1/2 cups quick-cooking polenta mix
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella or provolone cheese
- 1/2 cup finely shredded or grated Parmesan cheese
- 12 oz. Italian sausage
- 1 cup whole, fresh mushrooms, quartered
- 1 medium onion, cut into thin wedges
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- 2 cups pasta sauce
- fresh basil garnish (optional)

## DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 400°F.
- Lightly grease a 3-quart rectangular baking dish and set aside.
- In large saucepan, bring broth and butter to boiling. Meanwhile, in medium bowl, stir together milk and polenta mix. Slowly add polenta mix to boiling broth mixture, stirring constantly.
- Cook and stir for 3 to 5 minutes, or until mix is very thick. Remove from heat.
- Add 3/4 cup mozzarella cheese, cream cheese, and 1/4 cup of the Parmesan cheese, stirring until all the cheeses are melted.
- Spread two thirds of the polenta mixture into the prepared baking dish.
- In a large skillet, cook the sausage, mushrooms, onion and garlic over medium high heat until meat is brown, using a wooden spoon to break up the meat as it cooks. Drain off fat.
- Stir pasta sauce into meat mixture, and heat through. Spread meat mixture evenly over polenta mixture in baking dish.
- Spoon the remaining polenta mixture onto meat mixture, spreading evenly.
- Sprinkle with the remaining 1/4 cup mozzarella cheese and remaining 1/4 Parmesan cheese.
- Bake uncovered, about 20 minutes or until filling is heated through and top is light brown.
- If desired, sprinkle with basil. Makes 8 servings.

## **HOT TIP! Fire Extinguisher Use**

**Do you have fire extinguishers at home? Do you know how to use them?**

If your kitchen fire spreads, it is helpful to have an extinguisher nearby, to stop the fire in it's tracks. For kitchen fires, look for one with A, B & C markings, as these work on combustibles like paper and cloth, but also on liquid, gasses and electrical items. Have one mounted in the kitchen and in areas with other heat sources, and make sure every member of your family knows how to use one in an emergency.

An easy way to remember the steps is the acronym PASS:

**PULL** out the pin in the top handle.

**AIM** the nozzle at the base of the fire.

**SQUEEZE** the level slowly.

**SWEEP** from side to side.



# Eggplant, Tomato & Mozzarella Bake

Melody MacDonald (wife of Fire Captain Rich MacDonald)

## INGREDIENTS:

- 2 medium eggplants, 1 lb. in all
- 1 large onion
- 2 tablespoons Olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves
- 3 ½ cups canned plum tomatoes
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 8 oz. Mozzarella cheese packed in water
- ½ cup fresh grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 glass of red wine (optional)



## DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 425°F.
- Cut eggplants into ¼" slices, discarding the stalks.
- Layer slices into a colander, sprinkling each layer with salt. Put a plate and weight on top of the eggplant and leave to drain for a minimum of 10 minutes (up to 30 min.).
- Meanwhile, make a rich tomato sauce. Peel/chop the onion and fry it in 1-2 tablespoons of olive oil for 5 minutes. Peel and crush the garlic and add to pan, along with the tomatoes and the liquid, the oregano and the red wine (optional).
- Break up the tomatoes with a wooden spoon, then leave mixture to cook uncovered for about 15-20 minutes, or until liquid has reduced considerably, leaving a thick puree-like mixture. Stir sauce from time to time, and season with salt and pepper.
- Rinse eggplants under cold water and pat the slices dry with a clean cloth or paper towels. Heat 2 tbsp. of olive oil in skillet and fry the eggplant slices in a single layer – you'll need to do several batches.
- After a minute or two, turn the slices over, so that they get cooked and lightly browned on both sides. Lift slices out onto a plate or cookie sheet lined with paper towels, then fry the next batch.
- Cut the Mozzarella cheese into slices about ¼" thick.
- To assemble dish, put a layer of half the eggplant slices into a large shallow casserole dish. Pour ½ the sauce on top, then layer the cheese slices over that. Cover with remaining eggplant slices and the rest of the sauce, then sprinkle top with Parmesan cheese.
- Bake for 30-40 minutes, or until the topping has turned golden brown and mixture is bubbly.
- Serve it up hot!

## HOT TIP!

**Let's hear it for Fire Safety! Test your Smoke Detectors once a month to make sure they're working properly. Just push the test button on the front, and if there's no sound replace those batteries and test again!**



# Chicken Enchilada Soup

Human Resources Director Gena Finch

## INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups shredded chicken
- 32 oz. chicken broth
- 30 oz. green enchilada sauce (2 cans mild + 1 can spicy is perfect!)
- 1 small can of diced green chilies
- 4 oz. cream cheese
- 1 to 2 cups shredded cheese
- 1/3 cup half & half or heavy whipping cream
- cornstarch (optional)
- salt & pepper

## DIRECTIONS:

- Put everything except the half & half into a large pot and bring to a boil.
- Reduce to simmer until its heated through and the cream cheese is melted.
- Add half & half or cream at the end and warm. If needed, add cornstarch slurry to thicken.
- Add salt and pepper to taste, and top with a dollop of sour cream and crushed tortilla chips.

## **HOT TIP!**

**Fire sprinklers save lives! Fire sprinklers and smoke alarms installed in the home can reduce your risk of dying in a fire by 82%. Heat-activated sprinklers can stop a fire in less than 1.5 minutes, long before the fire trucks arrive.**



# Turkey Dumpling Soup

Administrative Analyst Clara Turner

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 lb. ground turkey
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1/2 cup Italian breadcrumbs
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese (or Romano)
- 1 medium yellow onion, peeled & diced
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1 can (14 oz.) diced tomatoes in puree
- 1/4 tps. fresh grated nutmeg
- coarse salt & black pepper
- 2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 carrots, peeled & diced
- 1 bay leaf
- 5 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup egg pasta (broken egg fettuccini or medium egg noodles)
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1/4 cup flat-leaf parsley or cilantro
- Zest of 1 lemon

## DIRECTIONS:

- Prepare Dumplings: Combine turkey, egg, breadcrumbs, Parmesan cheese and nutmeg in a bowl. Form into 1" balls and set aside. Wash hands thoroughly.
- Prepare Soup: Heat a soup pot over medium to med-high heat. Dice carrots into 1/4" pieces while the pot heats.
- Add olive oil to hot pot and add carrots. Turn carrots to coat them in oil. Add celery and onion as they are chopped. Season veggies with salt, pepper and bay leaf.
- Stir veggies and cook for 5 minutes. Let veggies begin to soften but NOT brown (turn down heat if necessary).
- Add wine and cook for 1 minute. Next, add beans, tomatoes and chicken stock.
- Put a lid on the pot and raise heat to high.
- When soup is boiling (about 3 min), add turkey dumplings directly into the pot. When done, stir in egg noodles.
- Simmer for 6 minutes to cook noodles and meat dumplings. Adjust seasonings as needed, turn off heat, then let stand for 2 minutes.
- Prepare Gremolata: Pile garlic, parsley and lemon zest on cutting board and finely chop/mix ingredients. (Or add garlic, parsley and lemon zest into a food processor and blend.)
- Ladle soup into bowls and top with 2 tsp of gremolata.

## **HOT TIPS! Electrical Cooking Appliance Safety**

- **Always use cooking equipment such as air fryers, slow cookers, electric skillets, hot plates, griddles, etc., that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory (usually marked on the packaging).**
- **Follow the manufacturers instructions on where and how to use appliances.**
- **Remember to unplug all appliances when not in use, and do not leave the house while cooking appliances are running.**
- **Check cords regularly for damage. Do not use any appliance with a damaged cord!**
- **When using slow cookers, be sure to keep things that could catch fire away from the cooker (papers, towels, etc.) Make sure it's in a place where it won't get bumped. If the lid gets dislodged, liquid could boil away, which could cause the appliance to overheat and start a fire.**
- **When using pressure cookers, keep the cooker in an open space to give enough room for steam to ventilate. NEVER cover the steam release valve on the pressure cooker, and do not leave the home when using a pressure cooker.**
- **When using air fryers, make sure you clean grease and food debris thoroughly after every use. Unplug and allow the unit to cool completely before cleaning.**
- **Do not plug several appliances into a single circuit. This can cause electrical surges, which can damage your appliances and lead to fires.**



# Cream of Artichoke Soup

Administrative Analyst Lisa Grigg

## INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 lbs. frozen artichoke hearts (thawed and roughly chopped)
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 2 cups heavy cream
- kosher salt & freshly ground black pepper
- lemon wedges, for serving



## DIRECTIONS:

- Heat butter in 4-quart saucepan over medium heat.
- Add garlic and onion; cook, stirring occasionally until soft, about 8 minutes.
- Add artichokes and cook, stirring until soft, about 3 minutes.
- Add stock and bring to a boil.
- Reduce heat to medium-low and cook until artichokes are very tender, about 20 minutes.
- Transfer stock and vegetables to a blender; puree until smooth.
- Return to saucepan, add cream, and bring to a simmer over medium heat; cook, stirring occasionally, until reduced by a third, about 45 minutes.
- Season with salt and pepper.
- Serve with lemon wedges on the side.

## **HOT TIP!**

**Avoid wearing loose or baggy clothing when cooking. Loose clothing can easily brush up against a flame or heat source, and catch fire.**

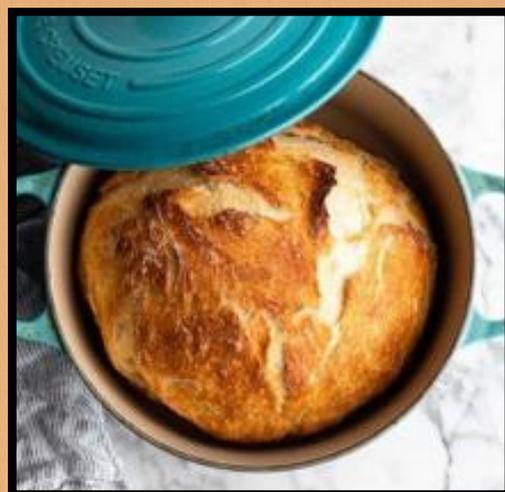


# Easy No-Knead Bread

Administrative Analyst Lisa Grigg

## INGREDIENTS:

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons active dry yeast
- 1 1/2 teaspoons sea salt
- 1 1/2 cups warm water (105°F)
- herbs/garlic cloves to taste (optional)
- 1 Dutch oven, 2 3/4 quart capacity



## DIRECTIONS:

- Combine the flour, yeast, and salt in a large bowl and stir to combine.
- Add the water and mix until the dough forms a ball.
- Cover the bowl with plastic wrap (sprayed with cooking spray) and a damp tea towel.
- Let dough sit covered at room temperature for 18-24 hours.
- After 24 hours (or at least 1 hour before you want to serve) preheat the oven to 450° F.
- Place a 2 3/4 quart Dutch oven (or a 2.4L baking dish) with a lid in the oven while it is preheating.
- While oven is preheating, transfer the dough from the bowl onto a floured surface.
- Form the dough into a ball, adding a few tablespoons more flour if needed. The dough should still be slightly loose. Then cover it with a floured towel while the oven is preheating. (Important note: The dough ball will be loose and "floppy." That is how it should be as this is a very moist bread which is what makes it so irresistible. You will not have a firm ball, it will look a little flat).
- Carefully remove the hot baking dish from the oven. Remove the lid and spray the dish with cooking spray or line it with parchment paper.
- Gently put the dough ball into the baking dish so it's evenly distributed.
- Cover and bake for 30 minutes.
- Remove the lid and bake for an additional 15 minutes, or until the loaf is golden brown.
- Remove the loaf from the baking dish and let it cool on a rack before slicing. To keep it warm, cover with a tea towel.

# Cinnamon Banana Bread with Pecans

Administrative Assistant Charlotte Cambridge Webb

## INGREDIENTS:

- nonstick baking spray (or butter), for the pan
- 1 stick (8 tbsp.) salted butter, melted and cooled
- ½ cup packed brown sugar or white sugar
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 ½ teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 4 to 5 very ripe bananas, mashed
- 1 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¾ cup chopped pecans

## DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat the oven to 350° F.
- In a large bowl, mix together the butter, sugar, eggs, and vanilla until well blended. Add the bananas and mix until combined.
- In a medium bowl, mix together the flour, cinnamon, baking soda, and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and stir just until combined. Add the pecans and mix until combined.
- Spray an 8 x 8-inch pan with nonstick baking spray (not olive oil) or butter works well too. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and spread it evenly.
- Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 40 to 50 minutes.
- Let the bread cool slightly in the pan on a rack. Slice and serve warm with butter!



## HOT TIP!

**Children under 5 face a higher risk of non-fire cooking burns. Never hold a child when drinking or cooking with hot liquids, to avoid an accidental spill and potential scalding injury.**

# 3-Fruit Dump Cake

Administrative Assistant Sarah Melton

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 2 cans cherry pie filling
- 2 large Granny Smith or other tart apples
- 2 cans diced pineapple, drained
- 2 sticks unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp. fresh ground nutmeg
- 1-2 tbsp. Cinnamon
- vanilla Ice Cream

## DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat the oven to 375° F.
- Pour both cans of cherry pie filling into a 13"x9" (3 quart) rectangular baking dish.
- Add in 2 cans of drained pineapple chunks, and spread evenly with the cherries.
- Dice apples into small 1/2" pieces and spread evenly on top of cherry/pineapple mix.
- Spread dry yellow cake mix on top of the fruit mix, covering the top as evenly as possible, until all the mix is covered.
- Slice chilled butter sticks lengthwise in thin slices, and place edge-to-edge on top of the cake mix, making sure to not leave more than 1/4" of the mix between slices uncovered.
- Sprinkle cinnamon and nutmeg on top of cake mix.
- Place on center oven rack and bake at 375°F for approximately 45 minutes, or until edges are bubbling and crust on top is golden brown.
- Remove and let cool slightly, then serve warm with vanilla ice cream.



## **HOT TIP!**

**NEVER** use an oven or stovetop to heat your home! Not only is it a fire risk, it can cause a buildup in your home of deadly carbon monoxide gas! If opting for a space heater instead, choose one with an automatic shut-off feature in case of a tip-over or overheated circuits.



We hope you enjoyed this collection of recipes and fire safety tips! For more information on Kitchen Fire Safety, visit the following sites:



[www.centralfiresc.org](http://www.centralfiresc.org)

[www.nfpa.org/fpw](http://www.nfpa.org/fpw)

[www.ameriburn.org/advocacy-and-prevention/](http://www.ameriburn.org/advocacy-and-prevention/)

[www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/home-fires](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/home-fires)

**Cooking Safety Starts with YOU!**

