

Kitchen appliances have come along way since our grandmother's time. Just fifty years ago, a woman was proud to have an electric coffee pot! She thought she'd died and gone to heaven when the electric frying pan came on the market. Now, if you rent or buy an older home, you'll find yourself in trouble if you try to run that electric frying pan, the microwave and coffee maker all at the same time. The breakers blow, because the circuitry wasn't intended for all these gadgets. Time to rewire!

One of the most useful of all the modern appliances has got to be the toaster oven. With the high cost of electricity, it's not smart to run the regular kitchen oven to bake a couple of potatoes. You'd probably use ten times the cost of the potatoes in electricity with which to cook them.

During the holidays, a toaster oven keeps side dishes warm while you're carving the roast or making gravy. You can bake a pie, roast a chicken, cook some biscuits or set it on warm for a few minutes, then turn it off to let bread dough rise with the door ajar.

The most versatile of kitchen appliances, you can use your toaster oven as a broiler for a quick grilled cheese sandwich or to broil up a juicy burger for lunch.

For single people, the toaster oven becomes indispensable. It takes up little counter space and can be tucked away on a microwave stand shelf when not in use. Cooking for one or two, you'll find you hardly ever need to use your big oven. With the exception of large roasts, ham or turkey, you can cook just about anything in a toaster oven.

If you live alone, that doesn't mean you can't make up a batch of lasagna, cannelloni or enchiladas. You eat one portion tonight and wrap the remainder in individual portions for freezing.

If you get eight portions from the pan, your toaster oven saves you time, clean up and electricity. You've got seven ready made dinners you can have over the next couple of months. One hours worth of electricity running the toaster oven allows it, and you, to sit idle for seven days in the future. Food preparation, along with dirty pans, measuring cups, spatulas and the like, along with the clean up, hot water and soap use happens once, but you eat for eight meals. Now that's what you call efficiency of effort!

Some of the new toaster ovens come with a convection cooking feature, allowing for faster cooking and as a bonus, a moister piece of meat with less shrinkage.

If you don't have one of these more-than-handy appliances, it's clear you

should. If you do, does your Grandma have a birthday coming up?