

Cardboard Box Oven

You can make a pretty awesome oven using a cardboard box.

The most convenient size is probably a copy paper box – about 11x17x9 inches inside dimensions. Line the box with heavy-duty aluminum foil, shiny side showing. The foil may be stiff enough to stay put on its own, but if not, you can staple it to the box using a staple gun from the inside. Just be sure to bend the ends of the staples over, so you don't get poked and scratched by the sharp points. You could also staple through the box into a strip of wood. I have done that, especially around the open ends of the box. Tape doesn't work inside, even metal tape. The adhesive melts. Tape outside is ok.

Suspend a 9x13 cake / cookie cooling rack about halfway up into the box. I have used empty soda cans before, but far more stable is a couple of legs made of a bent wire coat hanger, with the wire wrapped around the rack so the legs can be folded flat.

Place a sheet of heavy-duty aluminum foil under the box, and arrange lighted charcoal briquettes on the foil. Use the charcoal calculation chart, or your best guess, to get the temperature about right. Place the rack over the charcoal, put uncooked food on the rack, put the foil-lined box over the food rack (with one end propped up on a small stick or stone to allow air in to keep the charcoal burning), and set your timer.

Leather gloves are a smart choice to handle the oven and lift it off the rack, also to protect your hands while using tools to arrange the charcoal.

I have baked pizza, biscuits, cookies, bread, and even cake in a cardboard box oven. It works great. I have even backpacked a cardboard box oven into camp, and baked my food in it. The Scouts were jealous, and offered to trade their “yummy” Ramen noodle soup for some of my pizza, or cookies.

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