

WATT'S HAPPENING

SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE
LANCASTER, DARLINGTON AND GAYS MILLS, WISCONSIN

Appreciating electricity a penny at a time *Electricity is about the only thing you can buy* *and still get value for just a penny's worth*

I'm old enough to remember when penny candy actually cost a penny. For a nickel, you could buy enough candy to rot your teeth out, as my mother used to say.

But what does a penny buy these days? Not much. The government can't even make a penny for a penny anymore. According to the U.S. Mint, it now costs 1.5 cents to produce one.

About the only thing of value you can still get for a penny is electricity. You might call it "penny electricity."

No, I'm not kidding. Think about it.

To make the math easier, let's say the average rate for a kilowatt-hour of electricity is 10 cents. That is 60 minutes of 1,000 watts of electricity for a dime, so a penny of electricity equates to 100 watts. It's enough to power a 9-watt LED lightbulb—the equivalent of a 60-watt incandescent bulb—for 11 hours, all for only a penny.

Where else can you get that kind of value?

How many eggs will a penny buy? How much milk, bread, coffee, medicine or gasoline?

Gas has come down from its stratospheric levels of several years ago, but there is still no comparison to the value of electricity. For example, if a gallon of gas costs \$2.50 and your car gets 25 miles to the gallon, you can drive 176 yards—about two blocks—on a penny's worth of gas.

I will take 11 hours of lighting for a penny over a two-block drive any day.

The value is just as evident when powering things other than lighting. Take, for instance, your smartphone. Using the same 10 cents per kWh price, penny electricity allows you to fully charge your iPhone more than 18 times for a penny. You can charge it once every day of the year for about 20 cents total.



Not impressed? Well, how about these other examples of what you can do with just a penny's worth of electricity: power a 1,000-watt microwave on high for 6 minutes; run a 200-watt desktop computer for 30 minutes; watch 2.5 hours of your favorite shows on a 40-watt, 32-inch, LED television or 1.3 hours on a 75-watt, 75-inch mega TV.

The examples are endless.

We are fortunate electricity is such an excellent value because we have a huge appetite for it. We tend to forget that.

Electricity is not expensive. It's that we use it for so many different things: lighting, heating, cooking, cooling, refrigeration, cleaning, washing, pumping, entertainment, communications—even transportation these days.

Few corners of our lives are left untouched by electricity.

Unfortunately, we don't always appreciate it. When our monthly electric bill comes, we open it and may complain about the cost. It's a knee-jerk reaction ingrained in us as consumers. We don't

Be efficient in the kitchen with no-bake recipes

Cooking in the summer can be unbearable, and the last thing you want to do on the hottest, most humid days is turn on the oven to make dinner. Your air conditioner works extra hard during summer months to keep your home cool, so why not give it a break with easy, efficient, no-bake recipes. The recipes below are meant to help you make a delicious meal for your family, without breaking a sweat!

Meghaan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives. ■



Tzatziki

This refreshing dip can be eaten with pita chips or veggies. You can also add it to some grilled chicken or veggies as a sauce, or even add it to a salad to make a creamy dressing! Here's the recipe:

- 2 cups (plus one tablespoon) 2 percent Greek yogurt
- 1 cup cucumber grated
- 1 1/2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 cloves minced garlic
- 3 tablespoons dill leaves (plus extra for garnish)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Add all the ingredients to a bowl, then stir gently to mix.

Pita with Spiced Chickpea Salad and Whipped Feta

Spread the whipped feta into your pita, add the chickpea salad, and you have a delicious sandwich. Add grilled chicken or even a couple slices of smoked turkey or chicken breast for a heartier meal. Here's the recipe:

For the spiced chickpea salad:

- 2 cans chickpeas
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 2 teaspoons dill
- 2 teaspoons sumac
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon red chili flakes
- 3 cloves garlic
- 4 oz. cherry tomatoes
- 1/2 cup chopped cucumber
- 1 small red onion finely diced
- 1 tablespoon fresh dill
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro



Add chickpeas, olive oil, lemon juice and spices to a bowl, stir to combine. Allow the mixture to sit for 15 minutes to one hour to let the flavors meld together.

Add the tomatoes, cucumber and onion. Add the fresh dill and cilantro, stir to combine.

For the Whipped Feta:

- 6 oz. feta cheese
- 2 oz. cream cheese
- 1/4 cup olive oil

Add feta and cream cheese to a blender, slowly drizzle the olive oil into the blender top until the mixture is creamy and smooth.

Lemon Truffles

These quick and easy lemon truffles from *Pre-meditated Leftovers* is sure to satisfy any sweet tooth! **Here's the recipe:**

- 2 1/2 cups Lemon Cake mix
- 8 tablespoons melted butter
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- Zest of one large lemon

For Lemon Cake Mix:

- 2 3/4 Cups cake flour
- 1 3/4 cups fine white sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoons salt
- Zest of two lemons

Combine the cake mix ingredient into a large bowl, stir gently to combine. Add the melted butter, lemon juice and lemon zest. Use your hands to combine until the flour is moist and flakey. Roll dough into two inch balls, roll in sugar and serve!

Remember, no-bake recipes are a great way to keep your kitchen cool during the summer and show off your culinary skills. These are just a few of my favorites, but you can find a wealth of no-bake recipes online. Stay cool, and happy cooking!



Keep Food Safe Before, During and After a Power Outage

Unfortunately, power outages do occur from time to time. It's important to know how to keep your food safe during an outage. Use these tips from USDA to help minimize food loss and reduce your risk of illness.

Before power outage	During power outage	After power outage
<p>Keep refrigerator at 40° or below. Freeze items like fresh meat and poultry that you won't use immediately. Keep freezer set to 0° or below. Group frozen foods to help items stay colder longer.</p> <p>If you anticipate an extended power outage, buy dry or block ice to keep the fridge and/or freezer cold.</p>	<p>Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed!</p> <p>If the doors stay closed during the length of the outage:</p> <p>A full freezer will hold its temperature for 48 hours.</p> <p>A refrigerator will keep food safe for four hours.</p>	<p>Check the temperature inside your refrigerator and/or freezer.</p> <p>If the temperatures are safe, the food should be safe to eat.</p>

Foods that should be thrown out after an extended power outage:

Meat, poultry or seafood products

Milk, yogurt and other dairy products

Cooked or sliced produce

Eggs and egg products

Soft and shredded cheese

Opened baby formula

Dough and cooked pasta

Source: USDA

continued. . .

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stop to think about the value we received for the money.

Early in my career, I had the pleasure to interview an elderly woman who vividly remembered the day electricity came to her farm. Her name escapes me, but I do remember she proudly showed me the worn, dog-eared membership certificate the co-op issued to her husband.

“You young people will never know what it was like to have electricity for the very first time,” she said. “It was glorious. Nowadays, you take it for granted.”

Her farm was energized in 1940. She said the price of electricity at the time was slightly less than a penny a kilowatt-hour—true penny electricity.

A lot has changed since then. Wages and the cost of living today are a far cry from 1940, when the average

annual wage was less than \$150 a month and the average cost of a house was \$3,920.

But one thing that hasn't changed is the value of electricity. In 77 years, its price has risen much slower than the rate of inflation.

A penny in 1940 had as much buying power as 17 cents today, which means the residential price of electricity—which now averages 12 cents a kWh nationally and less than 10 cents in the Pacific Northwest—is actually a better deal today than it was in 1940.

So to my way of thinking, the value of electricity is like the bygone days of penny candy, and it's OK to indulge yourself a little. But, unlike penny candy, penny electricity won't rot your teeth out.

By Curtis Condon, editor of Ruralite magazine in Hillsboro, Oregon. ■

Recipes

Thank you Cathy Skaike (Platteville) for sharing your Salisbury Steak recipe!

Salisbury Steak

- 1 1/2 pounds of ground beef
- 1 package (6 oz.) Stove Top Stuffing for chicken
- 1 1/2 cups water, divided
- 3/4 cups chopped onions
- 1 package (8 oz.) mushrooms, sliced
- 1/2 cup barbecue sauce



Mix meat, stuffing mix, 1 1/4 cups of the water and onions until well blended. Shape into six oval patties. Place on 15 x 10 x 1 inch baking pan. Bake for 45 minutes at 350 degrees. Meanwhile spray large skillet with cooking spray. Add mushrooms and cook until lightly browned, stirring occasionally. Add barbecue sauce and remaining 1/4 cup water. Reduce heat to low. Simmer 1 to 2 minutes. Serve over patties.

Thank you Rita Kruser (Cuba City) for sharing your Quick Caramel Crunch snack that takes only 10 minutes to make! She shares that one piece is not enough and that they disappear quickly!

Quick Caramel Crunch

- 15 Graham Crackers
- 1 cup (2 sticks) Butter
- 1 cup Brown Sugar
- 1 cup Chopped Nuts (slivered almonds, pecans or walnuts)



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place graham crackers in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Fill in gaps with pieces of broken crackers. In a saucepan, melt butter and brown sugar. Stir in nuts. Pour mixture over crackers. Bake 10 minutes. Let cool. Break into pieces.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Let the sun work for you! Consider solar lights for outdoor lighting. Solar cells convert sunlight into electricity that can be stored in a battery and tapped at night to make light. Check manufacturers' instructions to make sure your solar lights are situated to receive sufficient sunlight to recharge during the day.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

Vegetation Management

Zielie's Tree Service, Inc. will be working on the Steuben substation in Crawford County.

Mi-Tech Services, Inc will be finishing up pole testing in Jamestown and Hazel Green Townships in Grant County and starting pole testing in portions of Mifflin, Elk Grove, and Belmont Townships in Lafayette County.

DJB Inspections LLC will be working on underground inspections on the Beetown, Hurricane and Glen Haven substations in Grant County.

It is important for SREC to maintain its rights-of-way for the following reasons:

- Accessibility for field crews, vehicles and equipment
- Fire prevention
- Reliable electric service
- Quality service with the reduction of outages and blinks
- Safety for workers and the public
- Meeting state and federal code requirements

On a daily basis, SREC employees and contractors are working throughout the area, at times on your property, to operate and maintain the electric system and our rights-of-ways. We appreciate your cooperation. If you have questions, please contact Jay at jpgardner@srec.net or call 800-236-2141, ext. 566.

WATT'S HAPPENING

Watt's Happening is published monthly as an information service to the member-owners of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative.

Any questions or comments can be directed to *Watt's Happening*, c/o Heidi Pierce, Editor, Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative, 231 North Sheridan, Lancaster, WI 53813 or telephone (608) 723-2121 or toll free 800-236-2141.

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