

An Alternative to Plastic Bags for Solar Cooking

When using the Cookit or Polyfurnace the plastic bag has been the main item to retain the heat around the pot. It is cheap to use and can be found many places around the world. However it tears and punctures easily and soon is discarded. Glass containers are an alternative that work great but can break easily and have size limitations.

An alternative that I am now using is the “microwavable safe” clear container. These are sold in grocery stores filled with food items like potato salad. This is all food grade plastic and can tolerate considerable heat.



Looking a bit further on these containers I also observed the recycle symbol with the number 5 on it. After researching a bit more I found it to be Polypropylene in composition just like the autoclave bags we were using for solar cooking. I then found a large container of this same recyclable material and found it works great for solar cooking too.



In addition to muffins and corn I cooked chicken as well as sweet potatoes to try multiple kinds of foods. There was no smell of plastic or off gassing. The box containers come in many sizes made by a variety of companies. I used clear *Sterilite* brand with a clip-on lid sold at Target stores. The clear box can be inverted to use the lid as the bottom or as the top and the ridges in the plastic box keep the pot up in the air a bit. Cost was about \$5 for the box with larger boxes available for deeper pots. The potato salad containers are also available for purchase in bulk or you can eat a lot of potato salad and keep the containers. This may be an alternative idea to try yourself if you are tired of chasing torn bags across the field and patching all the holes.

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