

## Soups and ingredients for soups

For all soups use just enough liquid for the quantity of soup wanted, as only very little liquid will evaporate with electric cooking. One plate of soup equals  $\frac{1}{4}$  l liquid. The cooking times of the recipes below have been calculated for the 1200 W plate and for four people.

(*Das Elektro-Kochbuch* (The Electric Cookbook), edited by the Hamburgische Elektrizitäts-Werke, Stettin 1935)

Cooking on the electric cooker, 1932



The society of the thirties, as in the twenties before, was a collective mass society. Values, however, had changed. The Bauhaus architecture of the Weimar Republic was dismissed as "Bolshevik" by the National Socialists, and replaced by the traditionally oriented "Heimatschutzarchitektur" (native land protection architecture). In housing developments, detached and semi-detached houses enjoyed a renaissance between 1931 and 1940. Big gardens encouraged people to grow their own food. As in the twenties, the working class homes were typified and the components strictly standardized. The pure cooking kitchen was

replaced by the live-in kitchen with family life in the focus.

The National Socialists' demand for a timeless style that would survive over generations brought about a reversion to traditional forms and materials for architecture and furniture design. The wooden "reform kitchen cabinet" became more important. This cabinet had separate divisions for food, tableware, and sometimes also for cleaning agents. It was matched with table and chairs of simple design, a cooking machine, and sometimes with the first electric refrigerators and cookers.

Reform kitchen cabinet, painted white, 1935, with built-in gadgets, Historisches Museum Bielefeld



## Reform kitchens – back to standalone units in the thirties



Reform kitchen with Bosch drum-shaped refrigerator, Household Fair 1933

The thirties saw a swing away from the fitted kitchen back to individual standalone units. At the same time, the Frankfurt Kitchen continued to be built. Werner Sell in Dillenburg, according to his own statement, in 1938 designed a flexible modular kitchen, which corresponded to the ideas of Erna Meyer and Gustav Wolf (see page 25). Detached cabinets of different modular dimensions were put under wall-to-wall worktops, sometimes in L- or U-shape. Because of the war, mass production of this kitchen started only in the late forties.

Electric cookers, which had begun their rise to popularity in the thirties, were expensive. Therefore, power utilities who wanted to sell their power offered customers hire purchase arrangements. For instance, an electric full cooker with four plates and oven cost 248.40 marks in 24 monthly instalments.

Most housewives still also had a coal stove, so they did not necessarily cook on the new electric cooker, especially not in winter, when the coal stove also heated the room. Therefore, the utilities sent household consultants into the homes in order to increase power consumption. The biggest drawback of electric cooking, the fact that the cooking plate stays hot for so long after it is switched off, making it hard to regulate use, was sold as a benefit. The consultants persuaded people they could save energy by heating the dishwashing water on the plate while it was still hot. From 1930 to 1939, the number of electric cookers in Germany grew from 60,000 to 800,000 (Haase, 1992).

Only the cities had a piped gas supply, so there were more gas cookers in the cities. In the countryside, some used gas cookers with

bottled gas, especially where there was no public power network before the fifties.

The electric refrigerator, launched in the late twenties, was still unaffordable for most households. In 1933, the drum refrigerator with compressor, made by Bosch, cost 365 Reichsmark. The shape was impractical, and in 1936, with only 5,000 units sold, it was replaced by a square model. One year later, not even one percent of the German households had electric refrigerators.

Coal stove, covered with white enamel, in the thirties, with oven, coal box below, and flaps to stand hot pots on, Historisches Museum Bielefeld

