

Listen to this excerpt from a radio broadcast on solar cooking technology.

Optional activity:

While you listen, decide whether the following sentences are true or false.

Sentence	True or false?
1. The modern form of solar cooking was invented 70 years ago	
2. There is more than one reason why solar power is a good way to cook	
3. Using solar power is good for the environment	
4. There are several different types of solar cooker	
5. It is not easy to use a solar cooker	
6. Solar cooking is becoming popular in different parts of the world	

Presenter: And now here is another in our series of reports, 'Africa in the 21st century'. This week our correspondent found herself in Kenya with a small, but significant story. Tell us all about it, Kate

Correspondent: Yes, I've been investigating solar cooking.

Presenter: Cooking using the heat of the sun?

Correspondent: That's right

Presenter: Well, I must admit to my shame that I've never heard of it

Correspondent: It's an idea that's been around in its modern form at least since the 1970s.

Presenter: But why *solar* cooking?

Correspondent: It's clean, free and in many parts of the world an abundant form of energy. It's become popular in countries near the equator because it comes as a very simple alternative to the traditional method of cooking using trees for firewood

Presenter: Which is not good for the environment...

Correspondent: Yes, it's a major cause of deforestation, it puts more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and it puts more pressure on already poor families. In Kenya it's usually the women and children who have to find wood to cook their one meal of the day, and have to walk greater and greater distances to get it.

Presenter: So what does a solar oven look like?

Correspondent: Well, there are basically three types – you either have a box, a fold-out panel or a parabolic dish - and each is covered in a shiny material or mirrors that reflect the sun's rays onto a black pot in which the food is cooked.

Presenter: Sounds simple

Correspondent: They are and that's the point. Anyone could make one from everyday materials. For the reflector you could use aluminium foil, for example. Obviously they've gone through many prototypes, but the idea is that this is a simple, reproducible technology for people in developing countries to cook their everyday meals.

Presenter: And is it safer than an open fire?

Correspondent: Yes, because you're using a reflector not a flame, although the cooking temperatures you get are similar.

Presenter: And the test, presumably, is not just can local people in Kenya use it and teach others how to use it, but are they still being used a year later?

Correspondent: Exactly, and that's what we've found. This isn't a solution imposed from outside that is discarded as soon as the aid agency turns its back. They are spreading all over the developing world, not only in Africa where I've seen them in action, but in Asia, the Caribbean, South America...

Presenter: So even I could use one when I next take the family camping?

Correspondent: Why not!

Answer key:

1. F
2. T
3. T
4. T
5. F
6. T