

## TOPIC: Compare Life Now to 100 Years Ago – Grandma’s Kitchen

Imagine cooking in a farmhouse kitchen in 1900. There were certainly no microwaves! Below is a picture of an actual farmhouse kitchen from ca. 1910 located in the Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum.



This kitchen represents a typical rural farm kitchen from over 100 years ago. Rural farm kitchens would not have had electricity or indoor plumbing. While Thomas Edison brought electricity to parts of Manhattan in 1882, electricity was not widely used and progress was slow. Most people still used gas lighting and/or candles for light in their homes. Only half the homes in the United States had electricity by 1925.

How would no electricity and no running water changed the way you live? How would you keep food fresh, done the dishes, cooked or baked, or even washed your clothes? Can you find some of the turn of the century versions of modern appliances in this kitchen?

Many of these devices in this 1910 kitchen were meant to make a women’s work more efficient. By organizing the kitchen a certain way and using tools and gadgets, women had more time out of the kitchen to focus on other household chores.

### Icebox

- The icebox first came about in the 1860s and became commonplace in the kitchen in the 1890s.
- Operation depended on the idea of heat rising, with ice stored on the top shelf. This allowed food to stay cool.
- Melted ice was collected in a tray placed underneath the icebox.
- In 1895, average price was \$76 to \$22 for a unit from Montgomery Ward and Company.
- In the 1900s, ornate and well-crafted iceboxes could be priced up to \$30.
- The icebox began to lose popularity to the electric refrigerator in the 1930s.



### Cast Iron Stove

- Most stoves were heated with coal, wood, or gas.
- As designs progressed, additions such as hot water reservoirs were added.
- Coal was less popular than wood or gas, because it caused excessive heat in the kitchen, especially during the summer.



### Hoosier Cabinets

- The Hoosier Cabinet became popular in the early 1900s and was considered a necessary item in most kitchens of the time.
- The cabinets typically had a large amount of storage space, as well as the ability to add on accessories.
- Three things prompted the increase in sales of Hoosier Cabinets: convenience, little built-in storage in kitchens, and the decline of hiring servances.
- Accessories for the cabinets could be purchased, such as spice racks, and glass jars to fit the cabinets.
- Companies that produced the cabinets capitalized on phrases such as “automatic servant” and “The Best Servant in Your House”.
- From 1910-1930 the cabinets became more ornate, and were sold in oak or white finishes. The more expensive models contained frosted or etched glass.
- The price averaged from \$20 to \$50 and could be purchased with payment plans.
- The Hoosier Cabinet became less popular when late 1920s houses began to include built-in storage pantries and cabinets.



### Sink with Handpump

- This “dry sink” was fitted with a hand pump in order to get water into the house.
- The water would be pumped into a bucket which sat in the trough of the sink as there is no drainage and the water would have to be removed manually.
- In order to have hot water, it would still have to be boiled on the stove.



### Other Kitchen Utensils and Gadgetry

In addition to the major appliances in a kitchen, there were other items that were manufactured to reduce a women’s time in the kitchen. These were gadgets were able to be mass produced thanks to the Industrial Revolution. These included enamel cookware, egg beaters, and food choppers. Enamelware was a lightweight alternative to cast iron and easier to clean.







Use the bottom T-Chart to compare and contrast what life was like in a 1910 Rural Farm Kitchen to your own kitchen. There are some features listed to get you started and one example. You can keep adding!

<b>Grandma's Kitchen from 1910</b>	<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>Your School</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No electricity</li> <li>• Often used gas lamps or candles</li> </ul>	Electricity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electric appliances and lights</li> </ul>
	Appliances	
	Food Storage	