



Straight Talk On The Price of Heating Oil

There is no beating around the bush. Home heating oil prices have gone way up. In fact, you may have received a mailer from the natural gas industry, trying to convince you to switch. But there are excellent reasons for sticking with oil heat, even as prices continue to fluctuate.

First, it's not just home heating oil prices that are going up. Nationwide, prices for natural gas, electricity, and propane heating have risen rapidly. According to the Energy Information Administration, the average American household will pay 20% more in home heating bills than they did last year.

Second, it's common for home heating oil prices to fluctuate more than natural gas or electricity since heating oil is tied not only to crude oil prices but also to



the capacity of our domestic refineries. What you don't often hear is that since the mid-90s, the average price for heating oil nationally has been lower than natural gas. In addition, there are concerns in the energy sector that future rates of natural gas production may not keep up with demand, which will certainly drive prices for natural gas upwards. The bottom line is that cost comparisons have equalized enough to make it financially unwise to convert to electricity, natural gas or propane.

Third, consider the long term costs. Conversion to a natural gas system is an expensive and time consuming process that can cost thousands of dollars. Oil furnaces also last significantly longer than other options, averaging 30 years compared to 15 years for a typical gas furnace. Moreover, a gallon of home heating oil produces more heat compared to a comparable amount of natural gas. In other words, your home heats up faster and stays warmer longer—which will keep you comfortable this winter until oil prices stabilize.

Finally, when you choose oil heat you have the comfort of being served by local companies, often family owned, that value your business, are responsive to your needs and believe in service above all else. We are not a nameless, faceless public utility—we are your neighbors, and we look forward to serving you well into the future. ♦

Online Resource

Questions about bioheat? Thinking about converting to a different heating system?

Before you do anything, log onto the website of Oregon Oil Heat, your number one resource for news and information about oil heat.

Visit www.oregonoilheat.com. ♦

Relief for Low Income Households

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps pay the winter heating bills or summer cooling bills of low-income and elderly people. During extreme weather conditions, people living in poverty and low-income elderly should not have to choose between buying fuel to heat or cool their homes and buying food for themselves and their families. The good news is that the House of Representatives just passed a resolution to double LIHEAP funding over last year. If passed by the Senate and signed by the President, the bill would make an additional \$2.5 billion available to low income households throughout the country.

To see how to qualify, visit www.oregon.gov (type "LIHEAP" into the search tool). You can also call the National Energy Assistance Referral (NEAR) project toll-free at 1-866-674-6327. ♦





Tips to stay warm and save money this winter:

- Have your heating system inspected annually to ensure that it is safe and operating at maximum efficiency.
- Check your air filter every month and replace it if it shows any buildup of dust and dirt. Dirty filters are the biggest causes of inefficient heating systems since they reduce airflow through your furnace.
- Seal your ductwork. Leaky ductwork can result in heat loss of up to 40% into your attic and/or crawl space. A rebate from the Energy Trust of Oregon and an Oregon income tax credit are available.
- Install a programmable thermostat. When properly used, it could save as much as \$100 off your annual heating bills.
- Add insulation to keep heat from

leaking out through exterior walls, ceilings with cold spaces above, and floors with cold spaces below.

- Open shades and drapes during the daytime to let in the sun's warmth. Close when the sun goes down.
- Install storm windows, drapes and weather-stripping to seal out drafts and block heat loss.
- Close kitchen vents, fireplace dampers and closet doors when not in use.
- Remove air conditioning window units, or cover them well.
- Keep radiators free of dust for maximum efficiency.
- Wrap your pipes to guard against heat loss and prevent them from freezing.
- Avoid using space heaters. Unless you are willing to keep the rest of the house chilly, they are expensive to operate and can be dangerous.

For more home heating information, visit www.oregonoilheat.com. ♦

Heating Oil Myths & Facts

Myth: Heating oil is old-fashioned.

Fact: Oil heat is a modern, efficient and environmentally friendly fuel source warming thousands of homes in Oregon. It is a clear liquid that is non-toxic, biodegradable and burns at a level of cleanliness approaching 99.9%. The EPA says that modern oil burners are one of the cleanest combustion sources available, releasing near zero levels of smoke and producing less greenhouse gas than natural gas systems.

Myth: You need to convert your home to natural gas in order to sell it.

Fact: This is simply untrue. Conversion is an expensive process and the Consumer Energy Council of America, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the best interest of consumers, has concluded that it is financially unwise for consumers to convert from oil to gas heat. Staying with oil heat saves you and your buyer money – so make sure you are working with a realtor who is savvy about oil heat.

Myth: Heating oil is bad for the environment.

Fact: Because of their high efficiency and cleanliness, modern oil heat systems have an amazingly small impact on the environment. In fact, today's oil heat is 95% cleaner than it was in 1970, and properly maintained new oil heat systems create absolutely no soot, dirt, or odors. Even better, they are fully compatible with biodiesel, a well-tested and renewable fuel made from vegetable oils like soy and canola grown in America. When used for heating, biodiesel is mixed with regular heating oil to produce a new energy source with even lower emissions.

Myth: Heating with oil is dangerous.

Fact: Heating oil is one of the safest fuels available without the explosive quality of natural gas. You can actually drop a lit match in a bucket of heating oil and nothing will happen! That's because in order to light heating oil on fire, you must heat it above 140 degrees, which requires an advanced high-tech burner. Also, heating oil also has an extraordinarily low risk for carbon monoxide poisoning. ♦



What's New in Aboveground Tanks

Modern aboveground tanks now come in a variety of shapes and sizes, making them easier to install in basements and garages and any outdoor areas that are short on space. And, because the oil heat industry has been working for decades to ensure that tanks are safe, aboveground tanks are built of corrosion-resistant materials and are designed to withstand the most severe conditions—including fire. For more information about the right tank for your needs, contact your local heating oil dealer. ♦

The Benefits of Autofill

If you aren't on an automatic delivery plan, consider the benefits:

- Never worry about measuring your tank or running out of fuel
- Let your dealer do the monitoring & handle the record-keeping
- Receive timely oil deliveries on a set schedule
- Enjoy top priority service in cases of severe weather
- Get the best price available
- Take advantage of dealer payment plans

How will your dealer know when to make a delivery? Most oil heat dealers use a "degree day" system, in which the median temperature (the mid-point between the day's highest and lowest temperature) is calculated. Every degree the median temperature falls below 65 is one degree day; the more degree days accumulated, the more fuel you use. By measuring degree days against your average usage records, your dealer can accurately gauge when it's time to deliver oil—and you enjoy uninterrupted warmth! Inquire with your local dealer today. ♦

Autumn Recipe

Love to cook? Need some inspiration? Then check out Allrecipes.com (www.Allrecipes.com). This easy-to-use website has thousands of delicious recipes with great tips and techniques for everyone from beginning cooks to expert chefs. Best of all, you can read other people's reviews of recipes to see how to make them work for you.

Here is a recipe for a delicious and heartwarming **Chicken Pot Pie** made from scratch with carrots, peas and celery. Over 1,000 Allrecipe.com readers have reviewed it, giving it 5 stars (the highest ranking!). It's a perfect meal for these cool autumn days—enjoy.

Chicken Pot Pie

Prep Time: 20 Minutes
Cook Time: 50 Minutes
(Ready In: 1 Hour 10 Minutes)
Yields: 8 servings

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound skinless, boneless chicken breast halves - cubed
- 1 cup sliced carrots
- 1 cup frozen green peas
- 1/2 cup sliced celery
- 1/3 cup butter
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon celery seed
- 1 3/4 cups chicken broth
- 2/3 cup milk
- 2 (9 inch) unbaked pie crusts

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. In a saucepan, combine chicken, carrots, peas, and celery. Add water to cover and boil for 15 minutes. Remove from heat, drain and set aside.



3. In the saucepan over medium heat, cook onions in butter until soft and translucent. Stir in flour, salt, pepper, and celery seed. Slowly stir in chicken broth and milk. Simmer over medium-low heat until thick. Remove from heat and set aside.
4. Place the chicken mixture in bottom pie crust. Pour hot liquid mixture over. Cover with top crust, seal edges, and cut away excess dough. Make several small slits in the top to allow steam to escape.
5. Bake in the preheated oven for 30 to 35 minutes, or until pastry is golden brown and filling is bubbly.

Cool for 10 minutes before serving.

Recipe provided by www.Allrecipes.com.

Recipe submitted by Robbie Rice. ♦

For more information about oil heat, please visit
www.oregonoilheat.com.

Or, contact the Oregon Oil Heat Help Desk at
503.546.5501 or **helpdesk@oregonoilheat.com**

