



Philip Nastasi Jr

REALTOR®, ABR®, SRES®

DRE # 01892875

Rodeo Realty Inc

Phone: 818-489-1960

pnastjr@justthepperfecthome.com

WWW.JUSTTHEPERFECTHOME.COM

## How to Get Ready for an Energy Efficient Summer

Getting your home ready for an energy-efficient summer is a great way to reduce your energy costs, which you may have noticed are creeping higher and higher. Here are some tips to help you prepare:

### 1. Seal Air Leaks:

Check windows, doors, and other openings for air leaks. Use caulk or weatherstripping to seal any gaps and prevent cool air from escaping.

### 2. Upgrade Your Insulation:

Proper insulation can help keep your home cool in the summer by keeping the heat outdoors. Consider adding insulation to your attic, walls, and floors.

### 3. Install a Programmable Thermostat:

A programmable thermostat allows you to set different temperatures for different times of the day, so you can save energy when you're not at home or even while you're sleeping.

### 4. Service Your HVAC System:

Regular maintenance of your heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system can improve its efficiency and reduce energy consumption. Replace filters regularly and have a professional check for any issues as soon as they arise.

### 5. Use Fans:

Ceiling fans and portable fans can

help circulate air and make your home feel cooler. Remember to turn them off when you leave the room to save energy.

### 6. Plant Trees and Shrubs:

Yes, we admit this is more of a long-term solution, but a very effective one for those of us long on patience. Planting trees and shrubs around your home can provide shade and help cool your home in the summer in the most natural of ways.

### 7. Use Energy-Efficient Appliances:

When it's time to replace old appliances, choose energy-efficient models that use less energy.

### 8. Reduce Heat Gain:

Close blinds, curtains, or shades during the hottest part of the day to block out the sun's heat. Thermal curtains are a great way to keep the heat out and the cool indoors where it belongs.

### 9. Limit Your Use of Heat-Generating Appliances:

Try to use appliances like ovens, stoves, and clothes dryers during the cooler parts of the morning or evenings. It's a great excuse to fire up the grill for dinner.

### 10. Consider Solar Panels:

Installing solar panels can reduce your reliance on the grid and lower your energy bills over time.

Follow these tips, and you're sure to make your home more energy-efficient and comfortable this summer.

## May Calendar

May 1 - Silver Star Service Day

May 5 - Cinco De Mayo

May 12 - Mother's Day

May 27 - Memorial Day

May is Deck Safety Month

## Homeowner Tips



### It's Time to Check Your Deck

It's deck safety month. Take a walk around this favorite family gathering spot and make sure it's safe. Look for split, spongy, or decaying wood, and any signs of insect infestation like small holes and piles of what resembles sawdust. Check your railings and handrails. Are they sturdy? Look at the risers and make sure they're secure. Keep the stairs and walkways clear of things like potted plants, toys, and decorative items.

## Mother's Day Gifts for the Mom who Loves the Great Outdoors

So your mom is not the "breakfast-in-bed-followed-by-a-manicure" type. If your mom craves the great outdoors and all it offers, here are some great out-of-the-box gift ideas - and you know your mom does not like to be boxed in.

**Outdoor-inspired Jewelry:** There is so much jewelry featuring outdoor motifs it's hard to choose. Does your mom prefer meadow flowers to sea animals? Are butterflies her passion? Whatever it is, bring a little of her love for the outdoors to her jewelry box.

**Books or Guides:** Consider books on outdoor skills, nature photography, or

guides to hiking trails, both near and far.

**Outdoor Experience:** Gift your mom a guided adventure like a hiking tour, kayaking trip, or a rock climbing lesson. Let her make a memory.

**Outdoor Relaxation:** Get mom some gear to help her relax outside, like a hammock or a comfortable yet portable camping chair.

**Outdoor Accessories:** Any mom who enjoys getting outdoors would appreciate outdoor gear like hiking pants, sun-protective shirts, hats to keep the sun off her neck, and other necessities like high-quality water bottles or hiking poles.



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## White Bean Bruschetta - Simple to Make and Big on Italian Flavor

### INGREDIENTS

#### Cannellini Beans

- 30 ounces canned cannellini beans rinsed well.
- 4 tablespoon Olive oil
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

#### Bruschetta

- 1 clove of garlic
- 6 large slices of good Italian bread Like boule or ciabatta
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- olive oil for drizzling on the bread

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### Cannellini Beans

Add the rinsed cannellini beans, olive oil, salt, garlic and rosemary to a small sauce pan and heat on low heat for about 5 minutes or until warmed though.

#### Bruschetta

Take your good quality Italian bread and drizzle it with olive oil. Place under the broiler and toast both sides until they brown (about 1 minute per side).

When the bread is done toasting, rub the garlic clove over the bread to release the garlic flavor onto the bruschetta. Sprinkle with a little salt.

#### To Serve

Scoop a heaping portion of the beans on top of each piece of bruschetta and enjoy.



Photo & recipe courtesy of:  
[KeepingItSimpleItalian.com](http://KeepingItSimpleItalian.com)