

Read the Fine Print: The Pros and Cons of Cooking Fuels

It's a good idea to get the facts about fuels before choosing a stove. Alcohol burns with an almost invisible flame, and denatured alcohol expands when heated, which can cause uncontrollable burning. Any open-flame stove consumes oxygen; this can cause asphyxiation. Never use a stove to warm the cabin, and always maintain good ventilation. Note that alcohol fires can also be put out with water. Alcohol fumes are lighter than air and disperse easily. The advantage of this over propane is that because propane is heavier than air, a leak in the fuel line could cause the gas to concentrate in the bilges and possibly lead to an explosive fire. When using propane, be sure tanks are stored in a dedicated, properly vented spot outside the cabin.

