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## Prepare Your Home to Beat the Heat

by *homewarranty.com*

Summer 2019 is going to be a hot one, so why not make a cool decision now and prepare your home to beat the heat? Follow these steps to keep your home cool and your energy bill low.

### Maintain your air conditioner

Regular maintenance keeps your A/C running smoothly and extends its lifespan. Clean the condensing unit, evaporator coil, condensate drain line, and replace the filter. If you notice the fins are bent and blocking airflow, fix them with a fin-straightening tool. Consider hiring a professional to do a maintenance check.

### Prep your windows

Are your windows properly sealed? Windows with air leaks let in hot air during the summer, causing your air conditioner to use more energy and run up your bill. Buy high-quality caulking material to fill in the gaps and seal those air leaks. After tackling your windows, seal any gaps you find around doors and the hatchway to the attic.

### Reverse the direction of your ceiling fans

The direction in which your ceiling fan spins makes a huge difference in the room it's located. In the summer, make sure your ceiling fan runs counter-clockwise so the breeze moves around the room.

### Add blinds, curtains, and awnings

Window treatments can cool your house down and reduce heat gain by up to 77%. Set up retractable awnings in light colors over your windows to reflect more sunlight. Curtains can reduce heat gain as long as they're medium-color (not too dark, not too light) and are a closed fabric as opposed to open weave. Blinds are another easy fix that easily allow you to control the amount of light that comes through.

### Update your attic's insulation

During the warm summer months, our walls and floors feel like they get ten times hotter. Why? The sun's energy hits your roof and travels into your attic, spreading heat throughout your home. By updating your attic's insulation, it'll retain cool air and minimize the amount of the heat that passes through. It'll also keep your energy bills from skyrocketing.

### Consider purchasing a smart thermostat

Smart thermostats not only save energy and lower your bills — they make your life more comfortable and more convenient. Imagine you're on your way home from work on one of the hottest days of summer. Your smartphone is able to tell your thermostat that you're only 10 minutes away and to start cooling down your home.

## May Calendar

5/12 - Mother's Day

5/18 - Armed Forces Day

5/27 - Memorial Day

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## 3 Elegant Ways to Decorate with Plants

Decorating your home with plants does more than just add aesthetic. Plants freshen our air, eliminate harmful toxins, and reduce our stress levels. So whether you have a modern or bohemian style, you can easily bring greenery into your home with these 3 elegant ways to decorate with plants.

**Hanging Succulents** - An eye-catching display of hanging succulents adds a bit of tropical greenery and bohemian vibe to any room. Succulents are easy to care for and last a long time, so don't be afraid to use real ones! Get creative and choose pots of various colors and sizes that coordinate with your room's decor.

**Tall Snake Plants** - This is one snake you won't mind having in your home. Snake plants are ideal for modern decor, with stiff leaves that stand up straight, drawing your eye up and away from the planter. But here's the best part: they're easy to care for! You can place them almost anywhere in your home since they don't need direct sunlight.

**Draping English Ivy** - Add a subtle touch of the outdoors to your home with English Ivy. Drape it from a high shelf in the office, on your front porch, or hang it in a bedroom. Since they thrive in cooler temperatures, you don't have to worry about placing them in direct sunlight. They're also one of the best air-purifying indoor plants!



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## Chicken Tacos

### Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1" strips
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tsp. chili powder
- 2 tsp. cumin
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp. paprika
- 1/4 tsp. cayenne
- 8 corn tortillas, warmed

### Toppings:

- Thinly sliced red onion
- Diced tomato
- Shredded Monterey jack
- Diced avocado
- Fresh cilantro
- Lime wedges

### Directions:

1. In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Season chicken with salt and pepper and add to skillet. Cook until golden, 6 minutes. Add spices and stir until coated, 3 minutes more.
2. Build tacos: In tortillas, layer chicken and desired toppings. Serve with lime wedges.



Photo & recipe courtesy of delish.com  
<https://warranty.life/2RhcohO>