

Appendix A

British Thermal Unit Conversion Factors

The thermal conversion factors presented in the following tables can be used to estimate the heat content in British thermal units (Btu) of a given amount of energy measured in physical units, such as barrels or cubic feet. For example, 10 barrels of asphalt has a heat content of approximately 66.36 million Btu (10 barrels x 6.636 million Btu per barrel = 66.36 million Btu).

The heat content rates (i.e., thermal conversion factors) provided in this section represent the gross (or higher or upper) energy content of the fuels. Gross heat content rates are applied in all Btu calculations for the *Monthly Energy Review* and are commonly used in energy calculations in the United States; net (or lower) heat content rates are typically used in European energy calculations. The difference between the two rates is the amount of energy that is consumed to vaporize water that is created during the combustion process. Generally, the difference ranges from 2 percent to 10 percent, depending on the specific fuel and its hydrogen content. Some fuels, such as unseasoned wood, can be more than 40 percent different in their gross

and net heat content rates. See “Heat Content” and “British Thermal Unit (Btu)” in the Glossary for more information.

Thermal conversion factors for hydrocarbon mixes (Table A1) are weighted averages of the thermal conversion factors for each hydrocarbon included in the mix. For example, in calculating the thermal conversion factor for a 60-40 butane-propane mixture, the thermal conversion factor for butane is weighted 1.5 times the thermal conversion factor for propane.

In general, the annual thermal conversion factors presented in Tables A2 through A6 are computed from final annual data or from the best available data and labeled “preliminary.” Often, the previous year’s factor is used as a preliminary value until data become available to calculate the factor appropriate to the year. The source of each factor is described in the section entitled “Thermal Conversion Factor Source Documentation,” which follows Table A6 in this appendix.

Table A1. Approximate Heat Content of Petroleum Products (Million Btu per Barrel)

Petroleum Product	Heat Content	Petroleum Product	Heat Content
Asphalt	6.636	Pentanes Plus	4.620
Aviation Gasoline	5.048	Petrochemical Feedstocks	
Butane	4.326	Naptha Less Than 401°F	5.248
Butane-Propane Mixture ^a	4.130	Other Oils Equal to or Greater Than 401°F	5.825
Distillate Fuel Oil ^b	5.825	Still Gas	6.000
Ethane	3.082	Petroleum Coke	6.024
Ethane-Propane Mixture ^c	3.308	Plant Condensate	5.418
Isobutane	3.974	Propane	3.836
Jet Fuel, Kerosene Type	5.670	Residual Fuel Oil	6.287
Jet Fuel, Naphtha Type	5.355	Road Oil	6.636
Kerosene	5.670	Special Naphthas	5.248
Lubricants	6.065	Still Gas	6.000
Motor Gasoline ^d		Unfinished Oils	5.825
Conventional	5.253	Unfractionated Stream	5.418
Reformulated	5.150	Waxes	5.537
Oxygenated	5.150	Miscellaneous	5.796
Natural Gasoline and Isopentane	4.620		

^a 60 percent butane and 40 percent propane.

^b Does not include biodiesel. See Table A3 for biodiesel heat contents.

^c 70 percent ethane and 30 percent propane.

^d See Table A3 for motor gasoline weighted heat contents beginning in 1994, and for fuel ethanol heat contents.

Note: The values in this table are for gross heat contents. See “Heat Content” in Glossary.

Web Page: <http://www.eia.gov/totalenergy/data/monthly/#appendices>.

Sources: See “Thermal Conversion Factor Source Documentation,” which follows Table A6.