Dutch Oven Cooking

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Dutch Ovens

Almost anything can be cooked in a Dutch Oven. Dutch Ovens are commonly defined as any covered metal cooking pot. *"Camp"* or *"Outdoor"* Dutch Ovens are made of heavy cast-iron, have three short legs on the bottom, and a tight fitting lid with a rim to hold coals.

Maintained properly, it is the *"Original Non-Stick Cooking Utensil"* .

Heat is controlled by placing coals underneath and on top. It can be used to stew, sauté, boil, deep-fry, bake, or just about anything you can do on a stove-top or in an oven.

Dutch Ovens are also available in Aluminum but are not discussed here.

Care & Maintenance

SEASONING A DUTCH OVEN

The only way to successfully cook in a Dutch Oven is to properly season it. When you buy a new Dutch Oven it is usually coated with a waxy material to protect it.

To obtain the desirable non-stick properties of a well used pot takes a little time and effort.

Wash with mild soapy water, rinse, and dry completely. This is the only time soap should be used on a Dutch Oven.

Grease inside and out (pot, legs, and lid) lightly with a good grade of olive oil, vegetable oil or solid shortening e.g., Crisco. Do not use lard or other animal products

as they will spoil and turn rancid! Do not use a spray-on coating (Pam), but rather use an oil soaked paper towel or new sponge.

Place it upside down on oven rack with lid separate and put aluminum foil underneath to catch any excess oil. Bake 300-350 degree oven for at least 1 hour. It will probably smoke and stink up the house! Seasoning outside on a gas grill keeps the smell and smoke out of your house. Cool it at room tempurature.

Re-grease and bake again while oven is hot. It will take more than this initial seasoning for the pot to obtain the desired uniform *black patina* (like a satin black bowling ball) that provides the non-stick qualities and protects the pot from rust.

If your Dutch Oven rusts or has a metallic taste this is a sign your seasoning has been removed. Repeat seasoning steps. This may also be required after storage or if it smells rancid.

For serious cases of abuse, steel wool, a "Brillo" pad or sand blasting may be required to get ovens ready to season again.

CARE OF A DUTCH OVEN

After cooking remove lid. Do not use as a food storage container.

Do not use detergents or a hard wire brush, unless you plan to completely re-season the oven. After scraping out all uneaten food, clean with hot water & natural fiber brush or nylon scrubby. If food is stuck to bottom or sides, boil water in it to loosen. Never scour or use your dishwasher.

Dry oven completely, then lightly oil the entire surface of the oven.

Store with lid off in warm dry place or place a paper towel inside and leave lid ajar.

The seasoning on your pot will improve with each use if it is properly oiled and cared for.

NEVER, REPEAT, NEVER! pour very cold water into an empty hot pot or you may cause permanent damage to the oven (cracking).

Dutch Oven Tools

There are a few *almost* essential tools for safe Dutch Oven cooking.

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One is a lid hook. These tools are available in many forms but even the simplest will prevent burns and dropped food.

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Small Shovel or Trowel - This is used to distribute charcoal briquettes

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Oven mitt or heavy pot holders to protect the hands

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Whisk broom (small) to remove ashes from lids

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Paper towels

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Oil for the pots

Dutch Oven Size Selection

There are a few *almost* essential tools for safe Dutch Oven cooking.

FIRST DECIDE WHAT YOU PLAN TO USE THE OVEN FOR, THEN SELECT ONE THAT MEETS YOUR NEEDS!

Capacities of various popular oven sizes

UTCH OVEN SIZE

VEN CAPACITY

ES OF DISHES

PERSONS SERVED

"

2 Quart

VEGETABLES, DESSERTS

2-4

[redacted]0"

4 Quarts

BEA[redacted]RS;

4-7

[redacted]2"

6 Quarts

MAIN & SIDE DISHES, ROLLS, DESSERTS

12-14

[redacted]2" DEEP

8 Quarts

TURKEYS, HENS, HAMS, STANDING RIB ROASTS

16-20

[redacted]4"

8 Quarts

MAIN & SIDE DISHES, ROLLS, POTATOES, DESSERTS

16-20

[redacted]4" DEEP

10 Quarts

TURKEYS, HENS, HAMS, STANDING RIB ROASTS

22-28

[redacted]6"

12 Quarts

ANYTHING FOR A LARGE GROUP

22-28

The most popular size is a 12-inch standard oven

The 10-inch and 14-inch pots run a close second depending on the size of crowd you cook for!

The major difference between a 12" Deep and a 14" standard is the amount of surface area top and bottom. You can get more heat on the larger pot for the same volume! *If your recipe requires a lot of heat then use the larger size pot.* If the recipe requires an average amount of heat or you are cooking a tall item then the Deep oven would be best.

Temperature Guides

Heat control is the hardest thing to master when learning to cook with a Dutch Oven. Here are a few tips to start you on your way!

Remember to start with moderate temperatures. You can always add more heat if desired or necessary.

***High quality briquettes* are recommended. Briquettes provide a long lasting, even heat source and are easier to use than wood coals.**

Briquettes will last for about an hour and will need to be replenished if longer cooking times are required. Group the smaller briquettes and add new (hot) as required to maintain the desired temperature.

If you use wood coals, remember that the flame will be much hotter than the coals! Avoid direct flames on the pot or turn frequently.

Each type of recipe will yield best results if you use the correct heat placement:

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General rule for stewing: Place 1/3 coals on top and 2/3 on bottom

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General rule for baking: Place 2/3 coals on top and 1/3 on bottom

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Stacked ovens can become a nightmare if the types of food do not have similar cooking requirements. The bottom pot seems to be the one that always needs attention and requires moving all others to get to it!

Stews, soups, chili, and other liquid dishes require more heat on the bottom than on the top.

Meat, poultry, potatoes, beans, vegetables, and cobblers require even distribution of heat on top and bottom

Cakes, breads, biscuits, and cookies require most of the heat on top and little heat

on the bottom.

Stacking of Dutch Ovens is a convenient way of saving space and sharing heat. This is best used for dishes that require even heating.

As a general rule of thumb. Take the Dutch Oven size, for example a 12 inch. Add three more briquettes to the top for (15"), and subtract three from the bottom for (9"). Adjust as necessary for local conditions.

In the following table you will see the recommended number of briquettes to give specific temperatures.

TEMPERATURE CHART

(these numbers are approximate)

emperature

inch

inch

inch

F

op

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op

ottom

op

ottom

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1 2

5

14

7

15

9

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16

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6

17

9

19

11

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16

7

18

9

21

11

25

17

7

19

10

22

12

50

18

8

21

10

23

12

00

20

9

23

11

26

14

Rule of thumb: Each briquette adds between 10 & 20 degrees

Place the required # of briquettes under the oven bottom in a circular pattern so they are at least 1/2" inside ovens edge. Arrange briquettes on top in a checkerboard pattern. Do not bunch briquettes as they can cause *hot spots*.

To prevent (minimize) hot spots during cooking, get in the habit to lift and rotate the entire oven 1/4 turn and then rotate just the lid 1/4 turn in the opposite direction. Rotate every 10-15 minutes.

Dutch Oven Recipes

Here are a few Web Sites & Cookbooks

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Dutch Oven Cookbook (Adobe PDF File - 111KB)

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McGuffey's Dutch Oven Recipes (Web Site)

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Geezer's Cookbook (Adobe PDF File - 182KB)

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International Dutch Oven Society Recipes (Web Site)

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Other Sites for recipes

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- A Happy Camper - Dutch Ovens
- Appalacian Traveller Dutch Oven Supplies
- Assorted Recipes Collections
- Assorted Recipes Collection II
- Backyard Dutch Oven Cooking
- Black Forest Dutch oven Cobbler
- Barbecue'n On The Internet - The Only Source for Real Barbecue
- Breakfast Recipes
- Box Oven Idea
- Byron's Dutch Oven Cooking Page
- Chuckwagon Supply - Cookbooks for DO Cooking
- Cooking for Scouts and Scouters
- Cybercook - www.scoutorama.com
- Cooking on Embers (Tin Foil Recipies)
- Cooking Resources -- The Dutch Oven Cookbook, The Geezer Cookbook, Box Oven and Foil Cooking techniques and recipes, cooking resources for beginner and experienced backpackers, and links to other resources.
- Dutch Oven Cooking at MacScouter
- Dutch Oven Cooking by Mike Audleman (v.Audleman orig.text'90)
- Dutch Oven Cooking Tips by Wayne Johnson
- Dutch Oven Cookoffs
- Dutch Oven Recipes at justdutchovenrecipes.com
- Dutch Oven Steak Soup
- Gary's Scout Cooking
- GORP - Going Dutch
- GORP - Trailside Cookbook
- Hudson Bay Bread (Sommers Canoe Base)
- Hurricane District Roundtable Recipe Roundup
- Larsen Dutch Oven Equipment
- LDP Camping Foods - Good Food Catalog
- Lodge Manufacturing Company
- Lone Star Dutch Oven Society
- MacScouter Dutch Oven Recipes
- Michigan Campgrounds Dutch Oven Tips
- Northwest Dutch Oven Society Recipes
- Ol' Buffalo Outdoor Cooking Page
- Outdoor Cooking - The NetWoods Scout Hut
- Outdoor Cooking - Outdoorcook.com
- Patrol Box - Netwoods
- Recipies - General
- Reflector Oven Cooking by Roger Claff
- Simple Menu Items