

Skillets, pots and Dutch ovens made of cast iron are heavy and are good, even conductors of heat. However, such utensils require special care.

Characteristics of Cast Iron:

- Is porous.
- Cannot tolerate temperature extremes.
- Easily cracks on impact.
- Stays hot – use hot mitts when handling.

Seasoning and Conditioning:

- Must be seasoned before first use and when needed.
 - Cover inside and outside of Dutch oven with unsalted shortening/cooking oil.
 - Place in 400°F oven for 20-30 minutes.
 - Turn oven off and do not open door.
 - Allow to cool slowly,
- Have baking soda handy in case of grease fire.

Cleaning:

- Do not immerse in cold water.
 - Do not use soap or detergent (seeps into cast iron)
 - Use only soft scrubber/cloth/paper towel (no metal – causes scratches).
 - Wipe very clean – re-oil inside with paper towel/cloth (no need to place in oven).
- To remove stubborn food items, fill with plain luke-warm water and place on fire until almost boiling; rinse clean with same temperature water; repeat process until food is removed.



Drying:

- Place utensil near fire so heat will dry moisture from metal.
- Remove and air cool.

Again, rub unsalted shortening/cooking oil inside utensil and lid.

Rust Removal:

- Scour rust areas with soap pad/scrubber.
- Rinse thoroughly in warm water.
- Place in warm oven for 5-15 minutes. Allow to dry thoroughly.
- When cool, cover inside with unsalted shortening/cooking oil.
- Place in 400°F oven for 20-30 minutes.
- Turn oven off and do not open door.

Allow to cool slowly.

Hints:

- To minimize cleaning and seasoning chores, line the Dutch oven with a layer of heavy aluminum foil before adding food.
- Leave about two square inches between briquettes.
- When using two or more Dutch ovens at one time, stack them to conserve briquettes. However, test the stacking before using (some lids are too curved or handles are too high).

Cooking:

Most baking recipes require a temperature setting of 350°F.

An easy equation to get a temperature of 350°F within a Dutch oven is to use the average of 35°F and then use this number (10) of charcoal briquettes underneath and on top when you want an even top and bottom temperature.

Please remember that too much heat will just burn your food.