



Above & Beyond

Scouting Skills Resource Guide

DUTCH OVEN COOKING

There are two basic kinds of Dutch Ovens; Cast Iron and Cast Aluminum. This page will focus solely on Cast Iron. You need to pick a quality Dutch Oven, there are hundreds of brands out there but only two I'd recommend; either Lodge or Maca. Buying cast Iron can last a life time. I have 3 pieces that I use regularly which were my great grandmothers from the early 1900's, still as good as the day she bought them.

This is what you need to look for no matter what brand you decide on:



- The walls of the oven should be the same thickness all the way around.
- There should only be three pieces in your Dutch Oven; The Body, The Lid and The Bail
 - The Bail should be thick and sturdy and should not be attached to a riveted tang. The Tang should be molded into the body of the oven.
 - The lid should fit securely in the body but able to come off without resistance.

- The Bail should extend beyond the rim you you can get lid lifter on it easily.
- The Lid Loop should be welded to the lid on both sides.
- For outdoor Dutch Oven cooking (Is there any other kind?) the Body should have legs on it, normally there will be three legs.
- The roughness of the Dutch is often controversial, I like my new ovens to be rough, it gives the seasoning something to stick to. If your oven is too smooth, then you might experience a peeling of the seasoning under some cooking conditions. Also you'll find if the ovens don't have that roughness, sometimes the seasoning will never completely stick to it and you'll be left with a grayish spot where its smooth.
- Don't get ovens with really short legs (No issue for Lodge or Maca) this makes it real hard to get coals underneath them and makes it harder to do stacked cooking.

Putting Aluminum Foil in a Dutch Oven is about as close to Blasphemy as you can get.

Selecting a Dutch Oven



Dutch ovens come in all sizes and shapes; round oval, deep, shallow, skillet, deep fryer, specialty ovens for bread, corn bread, fish, etc. Remember you cook on the top and the bottom in a lot of cases, so the shorter the oven the more heat will penetrate the middle of the oven and the taller it is will be the opposite.

Taller ovens are good for large stews, casseroles, bread and other dishes where the heat needs to be more controlled. Dutch ovens are typically measured by their circumference and depth. Typically Lodge Dutch Ovens are the most common you'll find, but when you need to feed A LOT of people, nothing touches a MACA.

I recommend a 12" Lodge Dutch oven for anyone just starting out. If you're a Boy Scout Troop, 12" Lodge's are a really good size for patrols. (Follow the patrol method !) It is a very versatile oven and one that is not overly large. Also, most Dutch oven recipes are written for a 12" or 14" oven. A 12" Deep or 14" Deep Lodge or 13"; MACA Dutch oven would be my next choices.

Lodge Dutch Ovens

Size	Capacity	Depth	Weight	Description
8"	2 qt	3"	11 lbs	Side dishes, vegetables, desserts, and sauces. Ideal when cooking for 2 or 3 people.
10"	4 qt	3 ½"	15 lbs	Side dishes, vegetables, beans, small roasts, desserts, and sauces.
12"	6 qt	3 ¾"	20 lbs	Roasts, poultry, fish, stews, potatoes, beans, rolls, breads, and desserts.
12" (deep)	8 qt	5"	23 lbs	Standing rib roasts, hams, whole chickens, stews, potatoes, beans, rolls, and breads.
14"	8 qt	3 ¾"	26 lbs	Larger roasts, poultry, stews, potatoes, rolls, breads, and desserts.
14" (deep)	10 qt	5"	28 lbs	Standing rib roasts, hams, hens, stews, potatoes, rolls, and breads.

16"	12 qt	4 ¼"	32 lbs	Large quantities of meat, stews, potatoes, rolls, breads, and desserts.
Maca Dutch Ovens				
9"	5 qt	6"	18 lbs	Perfect for cooking a main dish for a small group or a Side Dish for a large group.
11"	9 qt	6½"	26 lbs	Small Enough for a side dish, Large enough for a meal. Just right for cobblers, upside down cakes and other deserts. Good size for medium sized groups or Family Gatherings, BBQ Chicken or Cheese Potatoes
13"	12 qt	6½"	40 lbs	Perfect for cooking a main dish for a small group or a Side Dish for a large group.
15"	18 qt	7½"	46 lbs	Large enough for 12-15 lb. turkeys, Family Reunions or Scout Camp-

				<p>o-rees. Wonderful size because it is big enough to feed large groups yet small enough that it is still easy to use for Tailgate Camping or to bring with you to a Backyard BBQ.</p>
17"	29 qt	9"	67 lbs	<p>This one cooks it all, and a lot of it. The oven for catering, large family reunions and scouting retreats. This oven makes the impossible, possible.</p>
22"	45 qt	9½"	160 lbs	<p>In charge of cooking at the Klondike for all 45 troops of Scouts or the Big Family Reunion Dinner that reaches well past your family tree? This oven is for you. The leading ooh and ahh getter at Dutch Oven Shows. Can cook 50 pounds of Turkey side by side, two</p>

				18 pound roasts with room for more potatoes, carrots and onions than you would ever need, or a stew to literally feed the masses.
--	--	--	--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

My favorite Dutch Oven, Hands down is a Lodge 14" Deep; Stews, breads, roasts, chili for the masses. Very versatile for top cooking when the coals don't need to be so close to the food.

Seasoning a Dutch Oven

There are almost as many techniques for seasoning your new Dutch Oven as there are owners of Dutch Ovens. Practically every book on Dutch Ovens includes a section on seasoning your Oven. Also, Lodge and Maca includes directions on this subject with their Ovens. I tend to listen to my grandmother. I have dutch ovens that her mother had from 1910 and I still use them every day. I've adapted their techniques to my own because I have more technology available to me than they did.

1. Wash your new Dutch Oven thoroughly with soap and a sponge or plastic scrubber. DO NOT use a Brillo pad or other metal scraper, this will smooth the finish on your oven and make it hard for the seasoning to properly stick to it. As a matter of fact (opinion) the rougher the better. There is a protective coating on new Dutch Ovens that must be removed. The coating is there to prevent them from rusting. Dutch Ovens are cast iron. Rust will appear in a matter of minutes if water is left on them. The coating stops that while they are in shipment. But it must come off before use. This is the absolutely only time you will ever use soap on your dutch oven.
 - o If your oven comes pre-seasoned you may not need this step, but I do it anyway. I like to know what's been in my pots before I use them. Pre-seasoned isn't really that good anyway.
 - o Don't wash your pot unless you are ready to season it. Even the slightest bit of moisture can rust a naked pot.
2. After washing, dry the Oven with lintless clean white rags. Don't use paper towels, they are horrible and leave remnants all over your pot. I tend to head out to Lowes™ and buy "Rags in a Box". I used these for all my cleaning methods.

3. If you have a gas range turn on a burner and place the lid on the burner for about a minute or two. This will complete the drying process. Do this separately for both sides of the lid and both sides of the "pot." If you have an electric range turn the oven on "warm" and place the lid and pot in the oven, with the door open. This is a routine you should get into for every time you rinse your Dutch Oven. The heat will pretty much insure no moisture is left on the Dutch Oven.
4. My grandmother always seasoned her cast iron in the house. This is where I differ from her, you can if you want but the house will stink and chances are you'll set off the smoke detector. I use my outdoor propane grill. I happened to own a full sized stainless steel Duncane™ with a full hood. Depending on the size of the cast iron you trying to seasoning it should fit under the hood and the hood should completely close.
5. We are ready. Before starting you'll need the following
 - a. Start your oven or grill preheating. Crank it up as hot as it will go with the lid down.
 - b. Oven Mitts
 - c. Dutch Oven, Cast iron, pot, etc
 - d. SOLID shortening, I use Crisco (The white kind) or even better, pure lard.
 - e. A Sturdy Lid/Pot lifter or two
 - f. A lid/pot Rack for placement between seasoning steps
 - g. Resting bars. I use to 1/4' stainless steel pipes to keep my cast iron OFF the grill surface. You want as little of the cast iron touching your grill as you can. This makes for a better finish and better circulation.

Take a cloth rag and some Crisco and coat the inside and outside of the lid and the pot or the pan. Put the thinnest coat you can get on and still get full coverage. Most others will tell you to really put it on thick, but you'll end up with problems if you do. If you put it on really thick the grease will bubble potentially creating hard black pockets instead of a completely smooth finish. These pockets, if poked will break and you'll end up with a divot that will only collect food and make what you're cooking stick.

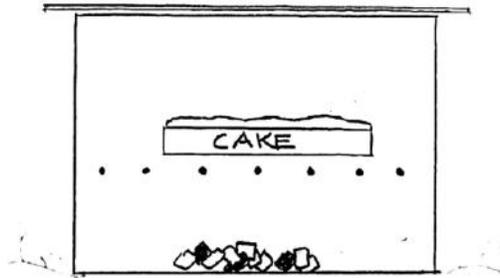
Place the cast iron on the metal resting bars in your grill and close the lid. There is no real set time for how long it should remain there, but here is what to look for. As the cast iron gets really hot, the grease will start to burn leaving a hard carbon based finish. As it burns smoke will begin to appear just above the surfaces. Wait until ALL the smoke has stopped, this will let you know that it is finished for this round. Carefully (Because it's really hot at this point) remove the pot/pan/lid using oven mitts and the lid lifter and place it on the Lid/Pot rack. Do not put it on the ground, even with legs, hitting the cold ground could crack your pot.

When the pan is still warm but not hot. You should be able to touch it without getting burnt. Please don't try touching it while it is hot, you'll have a nasty burn. Once it is barely warm, re-coat the pan with Crisco, again (and always) with the thinnest coat you can and still get complete coverage.

Repeat this process 4-5 times and don't think it looks good after three rounds, keep going. The more you do it the better the season will be. I've had pots for 10 years that have never had to be "re-seasoned" and the nothing sticks to them.

Finally, when you are done let the pot get cold. Place another THIN, THIN, THIN layer of grease all over the surface (inside and out). Cover in a dutch oven case or cloth bag and store until ready to use.

PATROL BOX OVEN



MATERIALS NEEDED:

- 1 Large box (apple or orange box are perfect)
- 1 flat cardboard piece, large enough to make a top
- 1 extra wide roll heavy duty aluminum foil
- 1 roll foil duct tape
- 12 bbq skewers

Cut the bottom and top out of the cardboard box. Line the inside and outside with aluminum foil. Seal the seams with foil type duct tape. Cut a piece of cardboard to fit the top. The size needs to be about an inch or so larger than the oven box. Line and seal the same as you did with the oven.

Punch little holes just big enough for the skewers about $\frac{2}{3}$ from the bottom. Space the holes evenly all the way across. It is stronger if you roll out a section of foil tape where the holes are going to be punched to prevent tearing of your foil, inside and out.

Place 10-12 coals on the ground and burn them until white in color. Place them evenly inside the oven. Put food on rack and cover with lid. Place a small rock on top to hold it down and prevent it from losing as much heat. Place a small stick or rock under one end of oven to let it breath.
