




Dutch Oven Cleaning


For cast iron ovens, the cleaning process is in two steps. First, you **remove all traces of food** and second, you **maintain the coating**.


Never Use Soap


 To remove stuck-on food: **Put 2 inches of clean water into the oven.** Put the oven on the stove **heat it with the lid on until it is almost boiling.** Let the water steam for a while and loosen everything up for you. It's a lot less work than scrubbing!


 **Pour out all but about 1 inch** of the water. Use a PLASTIC mesh scrubber, scraper or bristle brush to **gently break the food loose** Do not use Brillo pads, steel wool, wadded up aluminum foil or any other metal object to clean inside the oven.

 **Pour out the remaining water and wipe out any loose food** remaining in the oven with a paper towel. If food remains stuck to the Dutch oven, repeat the steaming process.

 After all food traces are removed, **rinse with clean water.** Let the Dutch oven air dry ... it should still be warm enough that this happens quickly.

 **Put the Dutch oven back on the heat** and reheat it until it is just hot to the touch. **Oil the interior** with 1 Tablespoon of vegetable oil, same for the lid. Use another clean paper towel or two to **wipe off any excess oil.** You want a *thin*, even coat of oil on the interior of the oven. Get the excess oil out so it won't puddle. **Place a folded, clean paper towel inside the Dutch oven.** After cleaning, do not put the lid back on until the oven has cooled completely. This prevents condensation from forming as the oven cools.

 When the lid and oven have cooled, **put the folded paper towel between the lid and rim of the Dutch oven so it sticks out just a little.** The paper helps keep the lid slightly ajar for air movement so condensation doesn't form as the oven 'breathes' with temperature changes.

 The **outside needs little attention** other than a good wipe down and an occasional oiling. **If you see ANY sign of rust forming on the Dutch oven's exterior,** lightly oil all of it.

No-No's

- **NEVER** allow cast iron to sit in water or allow water to stand in or on it. It will rust. Period. End of subject.
- **NEVER** use soap when *regularly cleaning* a cast iron Dutch oven. The soap will bond with the seasoning, it will get into the pores of the metal and it is hard to get out. From then on, soap will come out of the oven each time you cook and taint your food. This flavoring won't make you sick, but you probably won't much want to eat the food, either. If someone accidentally uses soap to clean a cast-iron Dutch oven, you will need to physically remove the interior seasoning (sandpaper, wire brush or with chemical cleaning) to get the oven down to bare metal. That's the only way to get the soap out of the seasoning. Once it's bare metal again, follow the instructions in the seasoning section. The only time soap and a cast iron Dutch oven should come together is when you re-condition an old Dutch oven or before seasoning a new one.
- **NEVER** use metal objects to scrape the inside of your oven. You'll damage the seasoning and impregnate it with metal that you will eat in your next meal. Excepting iron, we don't recommend metals as part of your regular diet (especially aluminum).
- **NEVER** place an empty cast iron oven over a hot fire. Pre-warm it or have food or oil in it. Otherwise, unless you are very lucky, your oven will crack or warp, ruining it.
- **NEVER** get in a hurry to heat cast iron, you will end up with burned food or a damaged oven.

NEVER put cold liquid into a very hot oven. It WILL crack!