

DUTCH OVENS

WHAT ARE DUTCH OVENS

Dutch oven cooking pots used for camping are made of cast iron. They have three stubby legs and a tight fitting flat rimmed lid with a handle in the center. The lid is used to place coals from the cooking fire on top as well as below. This provides more uniform internal heat and lets the inside act as an oven.

Typical camping type Dutch ovens range in size from 8-16 inches in diameter and 4-6 inches deep. You can use them to cook food many different ways; roasting, boiling, baking, slow cooking, or even frying by using the lid upside down.

Dutch ovens are also made of aluminum making them much lighter in weight than cast iron. However, aluminum ovens heat up quicker and food tends to burn easier in them than they would in cast iron ovens. They also do not retain their temperature as long as cast iron when removed from the fire. Aluminum Dutch ovens are not recommended for camping.

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF A DUTCH OVEN

Cast iron Dutch ovens, if properly cared for, will last for many generations. After purchasing, it is critical that they be seasoned before the first use. Seasoning will protect the cast-iron against rusting and help prevent food from sticking to the surface.

New ovens are usually made with a protective coating that must be removed prior to seasoning. To remove this coating requires some elbow grease and a good scrubbing with steel wool and hot soapy water. This should be the only time you will ever use soap on your Dutch oven. Once it has been cleaned, rinse it well, then allow to thoroughly dry.

CAUTION: The next step may smoke up your house if done indoors.

Preheat kitchen oven or outdoor barbecue to 350°F, place the Dutch oven on the center rack with the lid ajar and bake for an hour. This preheating does two things; it drives any remaining moisture out of the metal and also opens the pores of the metal.

This should be the only time you need to do this, unless rust forms or food begins to stick. After many uses, the oven will darken and eventually turn black with age - this is normal.

DUTCH OVEN COOKING METHODS

- Place the Dutch oven on top of a pile of glowing red hot briquettes in a campfire ring, then place hot coals on the lid. This allows it to act more like a kitchen oven.
- Suspend Dutch oven from a tripod over a pile of red hot briquettes. You can raise or lower the pot to control the temperature.
- Put coals in a pit that is about 2 feet deep and several inches larger than the diameter of the pot. Place Dutch oven on top of red hot coals and add more around the sides of the oven. This will act like a slow cooker.
- Turn lid upside down and use as a skillet or griddle.

To save time with camping recipes, cut up, measure and marinate ingredients for your meals at home and store in ziploc baggies.



[Dutch Oven Recipes](#)