

Title:

Get the Most from Your Cast Iron Cookware

Word Count:

712

Summary:

Tips for properly seasoning your new cast iron cookware. Use this easy method to get the most out of your cast iron cookware.

Keywords:

cast iron, cast iron cookware, cookware, cooking, recipes, seasoning cast iron

Article Body:

Cast iron cookware is an old fashioned form of cookware that still has a place in today's world of modern cooking. You will find all types of cast iron pots, pans, skillets, tea kettles, and even large dutch ovens. Those who routinely use cast iron swear by it's versatility and durability. I personally think that a good set of cast iron cookware is hard to beat.

There are a few conditions that you do have to meet when using cast iron. One of these is seasoning the new cast iron items that you buy or maintaining the seasoning of the ones you already own. Seasoning of cast iron is required to promote a non-stick surface on the cookware and make it easier to clean. Another consideration when dealing with cast iron cookware is maintaining the items in an environment where they will not begin to rust. Rust is one of the true enemies of the otherwise durable product. If these two conditions are met, then the cast iron cookware that you buy today, could still be in everyday service a hundred years from now.

The first aspect of seasoning cast iron is to start with a clean pan. Take the newly purchased item and remove any adhesive from stickers, and any other foreign material that does not belong. Washing the pan with warm soapy water and then drying it completely is normally sufficient. Next, pre-heat your oven to about 250 to 300 degrees Fahrenheit. The next step is to use lard or some other animal fat like bacon grease to start the seasoning process. Avoid vegetable oils as they tend to get very sticky and can ruin a brand new pan. Coat the inside of the pan with the lard and place it into the pre-heated oven for about 20 to 30 minutes. You will want to keep an eye on it to make sure the grease doesn't get too hot and start to smoke during this process. Once time has passed remove the pan and get rid of the excess grease inside the cast iron

pan. Then, put the pan back in the oven for another 20 minutes or so to finish the seasoning process. A new cast iron pan may require several treatments like this to establish a good "layer" of seasoning. What I mean is that you may have to do this a couple of times before the pan starts to become really non-stick and easy to use for everyday cooking jobs. Afterwards, you can use the cast iron to cook and it wouldn't hurt to use it to fry bacon or something fatty every once in a while to help maintain good seasoning on the pan.

As mentioned before, rust is one of cast irons true weak points. Rust can quickly turn a beautiful, well seasoned pan into a useless eyesore that you aren't quite sure what to do with. Preventing cast iron from rusting is simple if you remember a few guidelines. Always store your cast iron in a dry place. Do not keep it under the kitchen sink or hanging above your stove where it will be exposed to a steady supply of steam. Never put your cast iron away without thoroughly drying it. An easy way to dry cast iron is to place it in a hot oven for about five minutes or put it on a stove burner on high for a minute or so. This will burn off any excess water left over from when you washed it and will almost guarantee the avoidance of rust. If you do discover that your cast iron treasures have become rusted over time, there are steps to reclaim them. You may even come across a beautiful historic piece of cast iron at a yard sale or flea market and decide to revive it. Check out my article on restoring rusted cast iron cookware for more tips on reviving your rusty cast iron.

With a proper knowledge in seasoning and caring for cast iron cookware, you can enjoy all of the benefits of cast iron without all of the drawbacks that are inherent to it. With the proper care, the cast iron pans that you buy and use today can be handed down to your children and grandchildren for them to enjoy.