

Fieldcraft Skills

Field Cooking



Dutch Oven Cooking Tips

Controlling Heat in Dutch Oven Cooking

Depending on the recipe that you are cooking, you need to control the heat distribution provided in the Dutch oven. Most recipes involve baking or roasting, which call for heat to be "top down", meaning that the heat source should be greater from the top of the oven than the bottom. If you don't control the heat distribution, you risk burning the bottom of items that you bake, or undercooking items that you roast or stew.

Controlling the heat distribution in Dutch oven cooking is easier than you think. To do it, you place the charcoal to distribute heat. Placing briquettes on the lid provides heat from the "top down" which is important in baking, while placing all of the briquettes under the oven is important in frying.

The following chart breaks down the distribution of heat for different methods of cooking in a Dutch oven:

<u>Baking</u>	<u>Roasting</u>	<u>Stewing/Simmering</u>	<u>Frying/Boiling</u>
heat from the top (to prevent burning bottom)	heat equally from bottom and the top	heat more from bottom than top	all heat from bottom
3/4 coals on top 1/4 underneath	1/2 coals on top 1/2 underneath	1/4 coals on top 3/4 underneath	all coals underneath

When baking and roasting, rotate the Dutch oven 90 degrees every 15 minutes to ensure even baking. Simply lift the entire oven by the handle and rotate either clockwise or counter clockwise, but always the same direction of rotation thru the entire cooking session.

Preparing Charcoal

Always start more charcoal than you need, so you can add the extra later to maintain heat if necessary

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When preparing charcoal for cooking or baking, position unlit briquettes next to burning briquettes around the base of the Dutch oven before setting it on the coals. The unlit briquettes will begin to burn as the original briquettes burn out and provide continuous heat to the Dutch oven.

Baking Dutch Oven Desserts

Dutch oven desserts are probably the most popular items to cook, and desserts usually contain a lot of sugar. Sugar tends to caramelize and form a sticky mess in a Dutch oven. You can protect the seasoned surface of your Dutch oven, and make clean-up much easier by lining your Dutch oven with aluminum foil or parchment paper liners. Using an inner pan or liner will not only make clean-up much easier, but it will also make serving easier as well.

Lodge, the manufacturers of cast iron Dutch ovens market multiple liner options for Dutch oven cooking.

Remember - **NEVER** use soap in a Dutch oven while cleaning. Use water for clean-up, and if you need to clean stuck-on residue, use coarse salt with the water to clean the stuck on food residue.