

# Dutch Oven Cooking



## PURPOSE

To help Cadets and counselors learn basic camp Dutch oven cooking skills and to make cooking more meaningful.

## PREREQUISITE

A Cadet must have earned both the **Camp Cooking** and **Fire Building merit badges** before being awarded the **Dutch Oven Cooking merit badge**.

## LEARNING

This badge should be done in an outdoor setting. Although charcoal briquettes are preferred, hardwood coals from your fire pit can be used as well.

### 1. Cooking methods:

*Fry* — cooking with oil to prevent sticking

*Simmer* — cooking just below the boiling point

*Bake* — cooking food in dry heat

*Roast* — cooking meat etc. with water or broth

### 2. Your Cadet should be able to tell you these rules for taking care of a Dutch oven in his own words:

- Never store food in a camping Dutch oven.
- Use wood or plastic scrapers to clean the oven. Steel will scratch it.
- Use boiling water as needed to aid in removal of stuck-on food.
- Use a 50:50 mixture of water and apple cider vinegar to clean and disinfect the oven.
- Wipe dry with paper towels, apply a small amount of good vegetable oil, then wipe the oven inside and out.
- Place a paper towel in the oven to help absorb any moisture when storing the oven.

### 3. Dutch oven cooking methods:

There are different methods of determining the number of charcoal briquettes to use. One method is to take the number on the bottom of the Dutch oven, multiply by two, and divide by three. For example, most recipes call for a #12 oven. The number on the

bottom would then be “12.” Twelve times two equals twenty-four. Twenty-four divided by three equals eight. That means that eight coals go in a circle around the bottom outside edge of the oven, spaced equally, and 16 coals on the top of the oven spaced equally around the outside of the lid. Using hot wood coals from your fire pit works along the same principle. Using more heat on the lid and fewer underneath prevents burning and scorching the food.

When using wood coals, rotate the oven 90 degrees clockwise and the lid 90 degrees counter-clockwise every 15 minutes to prevent burning or scorching food.

Keep in mind: a charcoal briquette, when it is a third covered with gray ash, will produce 12–15°F of heat (7–8°C). That means that 24 briquettes will produce enough heat to make the interior of the oven 350°F (177°C) for about 30–45 minutes, depending on weather conditions.

## DOING

With the supervision of a counselor, prepare a side dish or a meal, approved by your counselor.

The idea is for the counselor to follow the cooking, care, cleanup, seasoning, and storage in order to have an oven that is ready to use at the next camp out.

Check to see that the Cadet can follow recipes and is able to determine the number of charcoal briquettes or amount of wood coals needed to produce the right amount of heat. Start with easy recipes (stews and cobblers). With practice and experience, a Cadet will be able to put together entire meals for his cadre. Use the Camp Cooking merit badge to find examples of what to plan for meals.

Other tips and suggestions:

- ▶ The use of foil liners, parchment paper, or aluminum foil will aid in clean-up of the oven.
- ▶ Foods that are high in acidity (tomatoes, baked beans, Pepsi) will hurt the seasoning of cast iron. You will need to re-season the cast iron after cooking foods high in acidity.
- ▶ Resist taking the lid off to check your food. Heat escapes each time you peek.
- ▶ You can search the Internet for helpful hints on purchasing, cleaning, seasoning, storage, and recipes.