

## **CAST IRON BASICS**

**Seasoning:** Cast iron may be heavy, but with a proper seasoning, is the greatest type of metal to cook in. But, you need to keep your cast iron free from rust and well seasoned to make it “stick free”.

Basic steps to season your cookware:

1. remove all labels and wash with warm water and mild dish soap\*
2. heat your item until it is warm to the touch, but not too hot to handle
3. smear all surfaces with Crisco or lard, (or vegetable oil, if you must)
4. place in 300 degree oven, upside down, for one hour \*\*
5. remove from oven, wipe off any excess oils, store with paper towel or cloth between lid and pot (for airflow)

\* after seasoning, never clean with soap again (some disagree)

To season the Dutch oven, place the oven upside down on the cooking grate and warm the oven for 10 to 15 minutes at 500° to 550° . With hot pads, remove the oven and rub a light coat of lard, bacon grease, white Crisco, or vegetable oil, using a paper towel

Coat the inside and outside of the Dutch oven and lid. You only need a light coat of oil, you don't want the grease to be dripping off the oven. Place the Dutch oven back onto the cooking grate and cook the Dutch oven for about 1 hour at 450° to 500° , or until the oven stops smoking. Remove the oven from the B.B.Q. with hot pads to cool. If the D.O. is a glossy brown color, not black, return to B.B.Q. to cook about thirty more minutes. By doing this outside in the B.B.Q., you don't have to fill the house with smoke and set off the smoke detectors.

**Cleaning:** Cleaning cast iron is really quite easy and simple. Many people will tell you to never clean cast iron with soap and water. I have found this to be an excellent way to clean cast iron and use soap and water frequently myself. Be sure that cast iron is warm, to free the food from the pores easily, and to rinse the cast iron with hot water very well to remove all of the soap.

The last and most important thing to do after cleaning your cast iron is not applying more oil to the iron. But, is to dry it completely over or in a heat source, to keep it from rusting. When drying cast iron, don't get it too hot. It only needs to be about 225° for the moisture to evaporate and dry out. Once the pot, pan, or Dutch oven is cleaned and dried, place a paper towel inside with a little of the paper towel going to the outside to “wick” out any moisture from inside the pot and lid. Be sure to store your cast iron dry, without oil to keep it from turning rancid.

**Storing:** As mentioned before, cast iron needs to be stored absolutely dry, free of any water, or oil. The water will rust the cast iron. The oil may turn rancid, especially if stored for a long period of time. Personally, I dry my cast iron in the oven at 225o for 30 minutes, after towel drying. So that I don't burn my hands, I just leave the cast iron in the oven until the oven has cooled down, about 45 to 60 minutes. When I'm camping, I dry my cast iron over a few coals, about 6, 4 under the bottom and 2 on the lid of the Dutch oven. Only keep the cast iron until the water evaporates. Then remove the cast iron from the heat source with hot pads and place paper towels inside the pot and place the lid on the pot. Be sure some of the paper towel lays over the edge of the pot to the outside to wick any internal moisture to the outside of the pot and into the air.

Once cast iron has been seasoned, unless it has not been cared for properly, does not need to be re-seasoned after you use it. So, why store it with more oil in the pot, pan, or Dutch oven. The oil will turn rancid, becoming sticky, smelly, and spoiled; just like food that has been around for too long in the refrigerator. The oil also attracts dirt, dust, and other things flying around in the air, like bugs. So don't apply any oil to your cast iron until it is warmed up just before you use it and put food into it. Take care of your cast iron and, it will take care of you.

**Temperature:** judging temperature is an important skill that needs to be practiced when cooking with a Dutch oven. First off, use only name brands of charcoal. Once you find a brand that you like, stick with that brand. That way you become familiar with how it burns, how long the coals last, etc.

1 white hot briquette equals 20-25'.

Cook on the hot briquettes with extra on top.

## **CHICKEN TORTILLA CASSEROLE**

4 chicken breasts cooked and shredded  
200 grams tortilla chips  
1 pound cheddar cheese, grated, add some pepper jack cheese  
2 chilies, diced ( or small tin)

### **Mix together:**

1 can cream of mushroom soup  
1 can cream of chicken soup  
1 cup milk or sour cream  
1 large chopped onion  
1 7 oz can green chili salsa

Grease a 12 inch Dutch oven. Crumble half of the chips into bottom; then layer of chicken, a layer of soup mixture, a layer of cheese. Repeat layers, ending with cheese.

Bake at 300° for 1 ½ hours Serves 8

## **HOBO GOULASH**

Serves 4 - 8 - \*can be doubled with a larger cast iron skillet- or 2

**Cooking time: 30 - 35 minutes**

**Note:** a loaf of Crusty bread from your local grocery or bakery or hearty stone-ground crackers go well with this dish. Just wrap the bread in foil and set it on top of your skillet or Dutch oven to warm during the cooking stage of the camp meal preparation.

**1 lb. Hamburger, - \*or any ground meat you choose**  
**2 cans. (14-16oz), Diced tomatoes, seasoned, undrained**  
**1 can, (14-15oz), Tomato sauce**  
**1 can, (14-15oz), Corn, drained, (whole kernel)**  
**1 lg. Spanish onion, chopped - (any onion will do)**  
**1 Green Bell pepper - diced**  
**3/4 bx, (10-12oz) Elbow macaroni**  
**2 cups, (1 pkg.), Shredded Cheddar cheese**  
**1/2 tsp. Salt**  
**1/2 tsp. Pepper**  
**1 tbsp. steak seasoning**

Chop onion and green pepper.

Boil macaroni and cook for 10 minutes. Drain.

Brown meat and drain.

Add all the rest of the ingredients except cheese.

Bring to a boil again and move to low heat or coals and simmer 10 minutes. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking.

Remove from heat and top with cheese. Recover for 5 minutes to melt cheese and thicken.

### **DUTCH OVEN LASAGNA**

1-1/2 lb. lean ground beef

23 oz spaghetti sauce

9 oz shredded mozzarella cheese

3 eggs

2-1/4 c cottage or ricotta cheese

1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

13 lasagna noodles

1-1/2 tsp. oregano

3/4 c hot water

Preheat the Dutch oven. Brown the ground beef. When done remove the beef to a large mixing bowl. Add the spaghetti sauce to the beef and mix well. In another bowl, add the cottage or ricotta cheese, Parmesan cheese, mozzarella cheese (reserve a few ounces for later), eggs, and oregano, and mix well.

Place the layers in the oven in the following order: Break up four lasagna noodles into the bottom of the oven. Spread about 1/3 of the meat mixture over the noodles. Spread 1/2 of the cheese mixture over the meat mixture. Break up five noodles and place over the top of the preceding mixtures. Spread 1/2 of the remaining meat mixture over the noodles. Spread the remaining cheese mixture over the meat mixture. Break up the remaining noodles and place over the cheese mixture. Spread the remaining meat mixture over the noodles. Pour the hot water all around the edges of the oven. Place the lid on the oven and bake one hour or until done. Check frequently.

Hints: This recipe works well with charcoal (12 briquettes on bottom and 12 on top). Cooking time can be reduced by pre-cooking and draining the lasagna noodles.

### **GIRL SCOUT DUMP CAKE**

2 (18 1/2 ounce) boxes white or yellow cake mix

3 (28 ounce) cans fruit cocktail , **peaches**, or other fruit and juice

1/2 -3/4 cup margarine

Pour fruit in cast iron Dutch oven. Sprinkle dry cake mix over fruit. Dot margarine on top of cake mix. Cover tightly, set in coals of campfire, putting coals on lid also, and let cook until cake is lightly browned. Rotate Dutch oven one quarter turn every 15 minutes for even cooking, especially if the active fire is only on one side of the Dutch oven. Recipe can be halved easily.

Serves 24.

### **EASY PEACH COBLER**

1 Box Duncan Hines yellow cake mix

2 28 oz cans sliced peaches (or equivalent)

3 eggs

1 cup sugar

1/2 cup brown sugar

Oil (at least 1/3 cup plus 4 teaspoons)

1 teaspoon cinnamon

Water

Large Ziploc bag to mix cake in

In Ziploc bag, mix cake mix, 3 eggs, 1 1/3 cup water, 1/3 cup oil.

Preheat oven over 8 burning coals. Add 4 teaspoons oil to pot. Add 1/2 cup brown sugar to pot

When sugar has melted, dump in peaches (with no more than 1/2 cup of the juice), Add 1 cup sugar, Add 2 teaspoons cinnamon . . . and . . .Stir. Pour cake batter on peaches **S-L-O-W-L-Y**

Put lid on oven and add 12 burning coals on top of lid. After 15 minutes remove oven from coals on bottom and continue baking from top until cake is brown and cake is done (check with toothpick). Allow cake to cool 30 minutes before serving.