

Guide to Smoothing

Cast Iron

with Kent Rollins

If your cast iron is rough or it's sticking, or if you have just purchased a new piece of pre-seasoned cast iron then we've got the best trick to get it ready to cook in.

The #1 problem with new cast iron is that most of it comes pre-seasoned now. Pre-seasoning is added by the manufacturer in an effort to reduce a step for y'all so you can cook with it right away without having to season it yourself. The problem with this is the manufacturer's pre-seasoning is rough which causes your food to stick and sometimes can flavor food poorly.

Follow these steps if you have rough cast iron, if you just bought new pre-seasoned cast iron, if you just removed rust or you're needing to build your seasoning back.

If you're trying to first build a good seasoning I recommend using flaxseed oil. It bonds really well to cast iron and it tends to take less time to build than other oils- one of my favorites being olive oil. After I've built a good base I will re-season after every use with olive oil because it's more readily available and less expensive.

STEP 1

Preheat a conventional oven to about 300 degrees F .
Rinse your cast iron piece well with warm water and
remove any debris with a sponge. Dry with a rag.

STEP 2

Place an 80-grit piece of sandpaper onto an electric hand
sander. Begin sanding the inside of your cast piece until it
becomes smooth. This will remove most of your
seasoning/pre-seasoning and you'll begin to see the original
silver cast come through.

Run you hand along the bottom and edges to make sure the cast
is smooth all the way around. You don't need to sand all the
"black" off. Just sand enough to a smooth finish.

You can do this sanding by hand, but it will take longer.

STEP 3

Rinse the cast well with warm water. With a clean, lint free
rag wipe out any excess moisture.

STEP 4

Place the cast over a medium-high heat burner. Let the cast warm until the moisture has evaporated. Remove from the heat. If needed, let the cast cool off slightly before seasoning.

Generally, you want the cast iron to be around 250 degrees F before seasoning (don't worry about being too technical, it just has to be warm to accept the seasoning). However, if it's too hot the oil will burn out and defeat the purpose.

STEP 5

Place a small dab of flaxseed oil (or oil of your choice) in the cast and rub with the clean, lint free rag along the bottom and up the sides. A big mistake folks make is that they over oil their cast which creates sticking. You just need to add enough oil to wipe a think layer over the inside of the cast iron.

STEP 6

Place the cast iron in the oven and bake for about 45 minutes. Turn the oven off and let the cast cool to room temperature.

STEP 7

Repeat steps at least 3 times (I've noticed flaxseed will build faster than other oils). As the seasoning rebuilds you'll see the silver disappear and start to turn a goldish color and then eventually turn black.


You don't need to let the cast turn completely black before cooking in it - this will build up more as you cook in it.


STEP 8

After about the 3rd or 4th seasoning you can begin cooking in it. The best things to cook in newly restored cast iron are bacon and potatoes. Cast iron loves starch and combined with the bacon it will help build a flavorful seasoning quicker.


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