

# **Traditional Scout Dutch Oven Cooking**

## **WELCOME TO DUTCH OVEN COOKING WITH 2ND LEDUC BACONEERS.**

### **INTRO**

Hiding in dank basements, drafty attics, and dusty, cluttered garages, these three-legged hulks from a bygone era wait impatiently to release their treasures. Until then, they are pitted by time and tarnished by neglect. For those who will uncover their mystery, they can once again be brimming with magic.

### **ABOUT DUTCH OVENS**

In North America the Dutch oven probably dates back to 1492. Columbus brought cast-iron pots with him to the New World. The name, Dutch oven, comes from the 18th century Dutch traders who sold their cast-iron pots door to door to the new settlers and Indians. Ovens came across the prairies on the back of wagons.

There are several varieties, look-a-likes, and wanna-be's when you begin shopping for a Dutch oven. There are, however, a few useful tips for buying the Dutch oven that is best suited for you. First, and foremost, be sure to buy the real thing. Make sure the Dutch oven is made of heavy cast-iron and has a flat bottom with three short legs. The legs keep the pot out of the coals and provide greater stability than four legs or none. The oven should be heavy and have strong wire bail-type handle. Dutch ovens come in a wide assortment of sizes ranging from the tiny 4" to the Goliath 24" monsters. For most patrol situations the 10"- 12" size is the adequate. Cast-iron Dutch ovens are available at most Sporting Goods stores, MEC or Campers Village. Campers Village will give Scouts a discount. And, don't forget to watch the garage sales and Thrift Shops.

### **SEASONING THE DUTCH OVEN**

The next step in using your new Dutch oven is "seasoning." Cast-iron is very porous. By filling the pores with grease a patina is built on the surface of the iron to protect it against rust a damage. A properly seasoned and cared for Dutch oven will last for generations. By

constantly and properly caring for and cleaning a Dutch oven starting with the day it is purchased will serve you for years to come. After the oven is thoroughly washed and rinsed, wipe dry with a clean towel and air dry. While it is drying preheat your oven to 350o / 177C. When the Dutch oven appears dry, place it on the center rack of the oven with the lid ajar. Heat the Dutch oven until it is just a little to hot to handle with bare hands. By preheating the Dutch oven you accomplish two things: you drive the remaining moisture out of the metal and you open the pores of the metal. Using a clean paper towel or preferably a cloth, apply a thin coating of salt free cooking oil. Corn, Olive or any vegetable oil will be fine. Cover every surface of the Dutch oven and lid, both inside and out. Return it back to the 350o oven with the lid ajar and bake, for one hour. Remove from the oven and allow to cool enough to be handled. Apply another coat of oil and repeat the baking process. Remove from the oven in one hour and allow to cool. Apply a final coat of oil when the pot becomes cool enough to handle. Your Dutch oven will now have three coats of oil, two baked on and one applied warm. Your oven is now ready to use or store. If the oven is properly maintained the coating is as effective as any commercial non-stick surface.

## **CARING FOR THE DUTCH OVEN**

Cleaning your Dutch oven is an easy two step process. First, you need to remove the food from the oven. Using a plastic or wooden scraper remove as much as possible. Fill the oven with warm clean water and heat until almost boiling. Using a plastic scrubber or a course sponge gently break loose food and wipe away. **DO NOT USE SOAP.** After all the food has been removed rinse with clean water. Allow the oven to air dry. Second, heat oven over the fire until just hot to the touch. Apply a thin coating of oil to the inside of the oven and the underside of the lid. You will not need to oil the outside unless there are signs of rust beginning to form. It is important to never use soap with your Dutch oven. It will need to be re-seasoned if you use soap. It would be a good idea to pack a plastic scrubber in a Zip-lock bag and keep it stored in your Dutch oven or chuck box to use exclusively with your oven.

**One sage of Dutch oven cooking, likes to fill a spray bottle with one part vinegar to four parts water to clean her ovens.**

**She sprays the dirty oven while it's still warm, puts the lid on for a few minutes, and then wipes the oven clean with a paper towel . Do not allow water to stand in or around your Dutch oven. Rust can develop through the best "seasoning." Using soap on your Dutch oven will cause it to impregnate the pores of the metal and taint the flavor of your meals. If soap is used the oven should go through the complete seasoning process again. Do not pour cold liquid into a hot Dutch oven. This will cause the oven to crack.**

## **DUTCH OVEN TOOLS**

The Dutch oven is a very basic cooking implement and requires few accessories. There are several tools which may come in handy.

- lid lifter
- gloves
- lid trivet
- table
- tongs
- chimney
- aluminum foil

## **DUTCH OVEN COOKING TECHNIQUES**

The Dutch oven is so popular because it is so versatile. Anything you can cook at home in your oven or stove you can cook with a Dutch oven. Since the average Dutch oven does not come equipped with a constant thermostat like your kitchen stove or oven you must exercise great care in controlling the -amount of heat. This is done by regulating the amount of coals you cook with on the top and bottom of the oven. Various types of cooking call for different placement of the coals.

The first thing you need to start is a good bed of coals. The most convenient method is to use charcoal briquettes. They are plentiful, easy to use, and provide a long lasting source of good heat. Wood coals are fine to use also. The method I prefer is lighting my coals in a charcoal starter chimney and using what I need and keeping the remainder in the chimney to ignite more briquettes to use as I need them. A good rule of thumb is to arrange the charcoals in a

checkerboard pattern, leaving a 2 - inch square between them or a circle around the outer rim. Heat radiates from the outside in towards the center. The heat is regulated by adding or removing coals as needed. Because charcoal briquettes burn so hot it will be necessary to check your food often. Preheat your ovens.

Use the following guidelines for these types of cooking:

**FRYING, BOILING**, - The heat should all come from the bottom. Place coals under the oven as needed.

**BAKING** - The heat will usually be more from the top than the bottom. Use a 3 : 1 lid to bottom ratio for placing your coals. Check often and remove or replace coals as needed.

**ROASTING** - The heat source should be equally balanced between the top and bottom. Use a 1 : 1 lid to bottom ratio.

**STEWING, SIMMERING** - The majority of the heat should come from the bottom. Use a 4 : 1 bottom to lid ratio.

**USING THE LID** - Because the lid is shaped like a very shallow bowl when inverted it is ideal as a frying pan or griddle. Turn it upside down and place it directly on the coals. This is a great way to fry scrambled eggs or pancakes.

A common problem of inexperienced Dutch oven cooks is to overheat the oven by using too many coals. Cast-iron retains and distributes heat very well. Using too many coals to cook with would be like trying to cook everything in your oven at home with it turned on full blast. Use the minimum amount of coals to start with and add only as needed. Don't make the mistake of using a lot of heat at the beginning to "get it started." Since cast-iron retains heat so well you may not be able to "slow it down" once you "get it started." Check your cooking often and make the necessary adjustments to control the heat. When cooking outdoors with a Dutch oven you have many options because of its versatility. You can cook directly in your fire ring atop the coals of your campfire. Another way to cook is to place a double thickness of heavy-duty aluminum foil on a level piece of cleared ground, spread your hot coals on it and put the oven on the coals.

To avoid serving “burnt offerings,” though, follow the simple

## “Rule of Three.”

Take the diameter of the oven (12 inches, for example) and subtract three ( $12-3=9$ ) for the number of coals to place below the oven and add three ( $12+3=15$ ) for the number of coals to place on the lid. This creates a temperature of about 325F / 163C degrees. There are charts and tables that give suggested numbers of coals for a specific temperature but the rule of three is the simplest method.

To increase the temperature by 25 / 4C degrees, place one coal on top of the oven and one below it. But weather will have an effect. If it's hot, the oven will cook faster; if it's cold, it will cook slower. Wind also dramatically affects the results of Dutch oven cooking.

Also influencing the result: the way you position the charcoal briquettes. Make a ring of coals about the diameter of the oven's bottom, placing one coal in the center. Set the oven on top of the coals and evenly place coals around the outside edge of the lid, with two coals in the center and one on each side of the handle. Hint: If you can smell your food cooking, you'd better check it regardless of the time suggested by the recipe. It's probably done.

Some folks line their ovens with aluminum foil or purchase ready-made aluminum inserts to make cleanup easier. Will the aluminum hurt your oven? No. However, it will affect cooking time and evenness of heat, as well as alter the taste. Remember, keep your cast-iron pot well seasoned and cleanup will be a snap.

Store your ovens with the lid off or with a folded paper towel half-in/half-out of the oven with the lid on.

## A FEW NO NOs

- Never, and I repeat, NEVER allow cast iron to sit in water or allow water to stand in or on it. It will rust despite a good coating.
- Never use soap on cast iron. The soap will get into the pores of the metal and won't come out very easy, but will return to taint your

next meal, though. If soap is used accidentally, the oven should be put through the pretreatment procedure, including removal of the present coating.

- Do not place an empty cast iron pan or oven over a hot fire. Aluminum and many other metals can tolerate it better but cast iron will crack or warp, ruining it.
- Do not get in a hurry to heat cast iron, you will end up with burn't food or a damaged oven or pan.
- Never put cold liquid into a very hot cast iron pan or oven. They will crack on the spot!
- It's easier to heat cast iron then to cool.

## **SAFETY CHECK**

- Dutch Ovens are very hot even though they may not look it.
- Oven temperatures can be in excess of 500 F / 260 C
- ALWAYS be aware of the Oven, the fire, the briquets and surroundings
- ALWAYS have available
  - water and/or extinguisher
  - fire retarded service to place Oven
  - proper equipment to tend to cooking
  - First Aid kit
  - NO horseplay

## **ACTIVITY SUMMARY**

Today we are going to experiment with a few dutch oven meals. We will break out into Cook Teams. Members of the teams will select a card, each card assigns a duty. One member will be the Chef. The Chef is responsible for the dish and cooking of the dish. The Chef guides his assistants to add ingredients, complete the cook and maintain safety of the fire pit. Please select a card and a position.

- Chef (manages and tends to food)
- Fireman ( adds coals)
- Protein (Sous chef- adds protein)
- Starch (Sous chef- adds starches)

- Veg (Sous chef- adds vegetables)
- Scribe (reads and advises on recipe)
- Server (serves up food)
- Red light (clean up crew)

## **SET UP / PREHEAT**

### **PICK A MEAL**

Next, select a card with your recipe.

- Breakfast- Mountain Man
- Lunch- Chicken quesadilla
- Dinner- Pizza
- Dessert- Smores

## **COOK**

### **TASTING**

Now that we are cooking our dish, let's fast forward and snack on the last groups cooking. *Pass out tasting cups.*

## **LOOKING FOR MORE RECIPES AND INFO**

**[www.leducscouting.ca](http://www.leducscouting.ca)**

### **CLEAN-UP**

- empty into storage containers
- remove debris
- rinse
- oil / season

## **QUESTIONS??**

## **THANK YOU**

## RECIPES

### **Mountain Man Breakfast**

1/2 lb bacon (or pre-cooked sausage)

Med onion

Bell pepper

2 lb. bag of hash brown potatoes

1/2 pound of grated cheddar

1 doz eggs

Small jar of salsa (optional)

The following requires 6-9 bottom coals and 12 -15 top coals:

Pre-heat 12" Dutch Oven. Slice bacon and onion into small pieces and brown in the bottom of the DO until onions are clear. Stir in the hash brown potatoes and cover; remove cover and stir occasionally to brown and heat potatoes (15-20 minutes)

Scramble the eggs in a separate container and pour the mixture over the hash browns. Cover and cook until eggs start to set.(10 - 15 minutes)

Sprinkle grated cheese over egg mixture, cover and continue heating until eggs are completely set and cheese is melted.

Optional: cover cheese/egg mixture with a small jar (~ 1 cup) of SALSA. Cover and cook for an additional 3-5 minutes. Slice and server like quiche. (Real men don't eat quiche but I sure get lots of requests to cook up the Mountain Man.) Cooking times will vary with the weather and your state of awake but its almost impossible to screw up. Serves 6



## **Chicken and Cheese Quesadilla**

10" Flour Tortilla's

Shredded Taco Cheese

Tyson Grilled Chicken Strips (Bags found in Freezer section of grocery stores)

Taco Seasoning

Sour Cream

Salsa

Spray both sides of Irons well, with non stick cooking oil. Lay Tortilla in middle of one Pie Iron. Fill with 3 to 4 strips of cooked and thawed chicken, sprinkle 1/8 c of cheese and taco seasoning to taste. Fold the Tortilla in on all sides, close Pie Iron and cook until Tortilla is golden brown on both sides. Serve cut in half with sour cream and salsa.

## **PIZZA**

Premade pizza dough

Sauce

Shredded Cheese

peperoni

## **WHISTLE PIG**

hot dog

cheese slice

bacon

garnish

pilsbury dough

# Smores

## **Required:**

pie tin

dutch oven

## **Ingredients:**

1 1/2 cup graham cracker crumbs

1/3 cup sugar

6 tablespoons butter

2 cups chocolate chips

2 cups mini marshmallows

## **Instructions:**

Either buy a premade graham cracker crust or make your own:

Melt butter. Mix butter with graham crumbs and sugar. Press into pie tin.

Heat dutch oven to about 350 degrees.

Cover graham crust with layer of chocolate chips.

Cook in D.O. for about 5 minutes to melt chips.

Cover chocolate chips completely with layer of mini-marshmallows.

Cook in D.O. for about 10 minutes.

Check every 5 minutes until marshmallows are brown.

Carefully remove pie tin and set to cool. If you can set it in snow or shallow cold water, it will cool the crust faster.

Serves 8, but they'll want more.

# Dutch Oven Peanut Butter Bacon Chocolate Bars

## Ingredients

- 1 package peanut butter cookie mix
- ⅓ cup vegetable oil
- 2 tbsp maple-flavored syrup
- 1 egg
- 12 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
- ½ cup chopped peanuts
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

## Instructions

Lightly oil or spray 10 inch dutch oven; line with parchment paper. In large bowl, stir together cookie mix, oil, syrup and egg until soft dough forms.

Reserve ¼ cup bacon for garnish. Stir remaining bacon and peanuts into dough.

Press dough evenly into parchment lined dutch oven. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes or until golden brown.

Sprinkle evenly with chocolate chips. Replace lid and cook for 3-5 minutes or until chocolate has melted. Immediately spread softened chocolate over bars.

Sprinkle reserved ¼ cup bacon over chocolate. Cool for 30 minutes before lifting from dutch oven