

Dutch Oven Basics:

Question: How much Charcoal do I use ?

Answer: You use twice the size of your Dutch Oven. If you have a 12" Dutch Oven you use 24 briquettes. If you have a 10" Dutch Oven you use 20 briquettes. Some people recommend 2/3 of the briquettes go on the lid and 1/3 go under the Oven. I like to use the 3 Up / 3 Down Baseball rule. For a 12" Dutch Oven, I take $12 + 3 = 15$ briquettes and put them on the Lid. This is the 3 Up part. I then take $12 - 3 = 9$ and put these under the Dutch Oven. This is not a hard fast rule, but it works most of the time.

- When it's really cold outside, I'll add a few more briquettes (the Tim Allen Rule).
- If I'm baking Bread, Rolls or Biscuits I'll remove the briquettes from under the oven $\frac{1}{2}$ through baking to keep from burning the bottom of the biscuits.
- If the Briquettes start to burn out, you may have to add more to finish baking.

Question: How often do I Lift the Lid and Check ?

Answer: If you look too often, you're just losing heat and it'll take that much longer to cook. I recommend doing a quick check every 15 minutes. I'll also rotate both the oven and the lid every 15 minutes to ensure that everything cooks evenly.

Question: How do I clean my Dutch Oven ?

Answer: I never use soap, soap will leave a soapy taste the next time you use the oven. Instead I'll put about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of water in the Dutch Oven and put it back on the fire (with the lid on) to bring the water to a boil. The boiling water will open the pores of the cast iron and release most of the food particles that may be sticking to the sides. The boiling water will also sanitize the oven for next time.

After the water boils, I'll remove the oven from the fire and carefully dump out most of the hot water. I'll then use either a plastic brillo pad or a crumbled up piece of Aluminum foil to scrub the sides to remove any stubborn food remains. Once it's clean, I'll dry it out with one paper towel and then I'll re-coat the inside with a small qty of vegetable oil. Then I like to leave a clean paper towel inside the oven and wedge a small folded up piece of AL foil between the lid and the oven to allow air to circulate.