



So, you've just gotten your first wood-fired oven - what do you do now?

Before you can jump into cooking, your brand new oven will need seasoning. This is the process of gradually heating your oven, which thoroughly dries the oven, insulation and bricks to ensure a smooth flame. This step will need repeating as part of regular maintenance (particularly at the start of a season or if your oven gets very cold), so please keep this for future reference. It may take a couple of hours, and a wood-fired oven can consume 2-3kg of wood per hour, so be sure to stock up first!

To build a fire, you'll need kindling (or broken compressed logs), natural firelighters and compressed logs. We recommend kiln-dried, low-moisture wood or compressed logs such as beech. Although not necessary, a butane gas torch can be used to speed the process.

First, build a cabin or jenga-like construction* using a few pieces of your kindling and place one firelighter in the centre. Light the firelighter and as soon as the fire starts to take hold, add a couple of logs of your choice. Continue adding them, small and often, until the fire spreads around the internal oven. It may lick around the inside roof - leave the door off at this point. Try to keep the fire from flickering outside the door to preserve the front painted panel, but don't worry. This can be touched up as necessary with heat-resistant paint. When the smoke from the flue burns clear, add more wood. The temperature will reach 400°C and at that point, you're ready to start cooking.

*If you're using one of our larger ovens such as the Apollo, Eterno, or Vulcan, you may want to make 2-3 of these structures and have several small fires before combining them into one larger flame.

Brush the embers and timber to whichever side you'd prefer, then place a log guard to keep the burning logs and ash away from your food, and protect your food from the flames. Using an infrared thermometer set to centigrade, (while the external thermometer is more of an indicator that the internal oven is gaining/losing heat, an infrared thermometer is needed to give an precise reading of the tiles) keep an eye on the temperature. Our ovens have reached temps far in excess of 600°C- while that may impress, burnt pizza certainly won't! Pop the door back on to help lower the temperature, or keep half on to maintain heat.

Additional info

As you practice, you'll get to know your oven's capabilities as well as your own. We strongly encourage experimenting as the only limit is your own imagination - we started with pizza then progressed with joints of meat, veggies and steaks. We'd recommend 350-400°C deg for pizza, 270°C for roasting and 200°C for baking.

- You may find pushing the wood to the side/s will work better than pushing the wood to the back, the oven requires air, drawn through the front door aperture across the fire and up along the roof with the heated air going through the flue.
- In warmer weather the oven will fire up and be ready to go in a very short time, maybe half an hour or so, while in very cold weather it will take much longer, maybe even a couple of hours. This is normal, we have successfully lit and retained an oven in minus 6°C during testing, but as with everything you will get better.

Maintenance: Wait for the oven to cool!

Very little maintenance is required for a wood-fired oven, but we would recommend wiping the oven cover down with warm soapy water (if it's powder-coated) or wipe with a clean, soft cloth (if stainless steel). The black oven body can also be cleaned with warm soapy water or general cleaner. Over time, the painted finish may look worn and tired. To keep it looking new, repaint with any good quality heat-resistant paint. Clean out ash and debris with a soft brush and dustpan as required.

Enjoy!

Please email info@skillcraftproducts.com with your name, address and date purchased for warranty purposes. Our oven is covered by a standard 1 year guarantee against faulty materials or workmanship, contact us for a return or replacement. In the unlikely event that you have problems after that, feel free to drop us a line, we may still assist at our discretion. Under normal use the oven should last for many, many years. See our Privacy Policy for more.

Although these are outdoor ovens, there is still the risk of carbon monoxide as well as other fire related hazards such as burns. Please ensure adequate ventilation at all times and take care when dealing with things like discarded embers.