

Dutch Oven Cooking Temperatures

Hand Test

Just remove the lid from the dutch oven and place your hand just above or just inside the oven. Count how many seconds you can keep your hand there before it gets too hot. It is about 50 degrees per second counting down from 550, so just count - "550, and 500, and 450, and 400, and 350, and 300, ...".



Seconds	Temperature
1	500+
2	500
3	450
4	400
5	350
6	300
7	250
8	200

Counting Charcoal

Lots of dutch oven cookbooks tell you how many charcoal briquettes to put under and on top of the oven. This is the easiest way to cook since every coal is similar and consistent. The normal formula is to use twice the number of briquettes as the diameter of the oven. For a 12 inch oven, you would use 24 briquettes.

Baking: More heat from top so bottom does not burn. Place 3/4 coals on top and 1/4 underneath. 12" oven - Place 18 briquettes on lid and 6 underneath.
Roasting: Heat comes equally from top and bottom. Place 1/2 coals on top and 1/2 underneath. 12" oven - Place 14 briquettes on lid and 10 underneath.
Stewing, Simmering: Most heat from bottom. Place 1/4 coals on top and 3/4 underneath. 12" oven - Place 6 briquettes on lid and 18 underneath.
Frying, Boiling: All heat from bottom. Place all coals underneath.

Rule of 3

This is a real simple. Take the dutch oven diameter and add 3 briquettes on top. Subtract 3 briquettes underneath. So, a 12 inch oven would have $12+3=15$ on top and $12-3=9$ underneath. This works for any size dutch oven. Then you need to adjust briquette placement depending on the type of cooking.

Rings of Coals

Take a 12 inch dutch oven and 24 briquettes. On the lid, make a ring of briquettes all the way around the outer edge. 15 or 16
Make a ring just under



the oven. There should be 3 or 4 briquettes between each leg for a total of 9 to 12.

That is pretty close to the recommendation for a 350 degree roasting. A ring around the top and the bottom is about 325 to 350 degrees. Remove every other briquette underneath to make 300 degrees. Add a second ring to the top to make 375 degrees.

Maintaining Even Heat

No matter how evenly you distribute your coals above and below your dutch oven, there will be some spots that get hotter than others due to wind, quality of fuel, and phase of the moon. To prevent burned and raw portions of your meal, you should just rotate your oven occasionally, maybe every 10 minutes.



Turn the oven clockwise 1/3 of a revolution & With a lid lifter or pliers, twist the lid counter-clockwise 1/3 turn. Take a quick look inside at this time will give you an idea if the coals are cooking too fast or slow. Just be careful to not drop ash in or let heat out.

Maintaining Long Heat

Your first batch of coals will probably keep the oven hot for 30 to 45 minutes. That's long enough to cook most things, but you sure don't want to let the oven go out for those 1 hour or longer meals. Check your oven every 20 or 30 minutes to see that the coals are ok. If there are some white ash areas fill in with a few more coals. Or, brush out all old and put on a new batch all at once.

Temperature Tips

- You can cook food, but you can't unburn food. Use less heat and cook longer rather than overheating.
- Preheat your dutch oven for frying or searing meat. Otherwise, put the food in cold and let it all heat up together.

Other Tips:

- Line the dutch oven with aluminum foil to minimize clean-up of sugary desserts.
- Use an aluminum pie tin set on 4 pebbles in the dutch oven for rolls or bisquits.
- Use wooden or metal utensils to scoop out food.
- Make sure you have a clean, sturdy place to set the lid. bit of oil or grease rubbed in the oven will really help minimize food sticking.

See Recipes and more tips about Dutch Oven Cooking at www.DutchOvenDude.com