

Firing & Using Your Outdoor Wood Oven

Quality firewood is essential for the operation of your wood fired oven. Here is some basic information about firewood.

Be sure to get your monies worth when purchasing firewood. Cord sizes are regulated and must comply with industry standards. The best way to be sure you are getting what you are paying for is to measure your delivered firewood, which should be stacked neatly.

Firewood should be seasoned, split & ready to burn. Wood cut should be approximately 12 to 16 inches in length and 2 to 4 inches in diameter

Woods to use - Must Be Hardwood



Avoid Soft Woods – Pines & Spruces.

- Oak – **Perfect**
- Fruit Woods such as Apple, Plum or Cherry - **Delicious**
- Beech, Ash, Maple, Cedar – **Underrated and very good indeed**

Seek well seasoned wood, moisture content of 15% or less reduces the amount of smoke and will burn well and reach the correct temperatures.

Tools required -

- Hardwood kindling
- Split seasoned hardwood Log
- Pizza Peel
- Matches or Lighter



Curing Your Oven – Please follow this Guide to Prevent Damage

Although your oven may seem dry once you complete the installation process, there are still small amounts of moisture pockets that need to work their way out.

If you build a large fire in your oven from the onset, you could compromise your oven's longevity and cooking efficiency, and can ultimately cause permanent damage, which may void the manufacturer's warranty.

When lighting the first fire, keep the temperature low - so the moisture can be slowly released from the oven and surrounding masonry work. This curing process should be conducted at a temperature as close to 212°F (100°C) as possible (do not exceed that temperature) for a period of three days. A good suggestion is to build a fire, using small pieces of hardwood kindling - You will generate Gentle heat and the oven will cure as required.

Curing - Day One

Use around 750g kindling, light half in the rear of the oven, then add the other half when it dies down. Allow the oven to cool completely, then repeat again. Do this 3 times. Then, the same again, but use a few pieces of extra hardwood kindling to maintain a temperature of around 150°C for 20 minutes or so. Allow to cool.

Repeat this over a few firings and gradually increase the temperature of the oven – 200 degrees then 250.

Summary –

- Use Hardwood – Dry Hardwood
- Small Fires – Control Temperature using Hardwood Kindling
- Run to 100 Degrees C (approximately) Keep to this temperature for 3 hours (or More)– allow to cool
- Repeat again – allow to cool
- Repeat – but increase temperature to around 150 – allow to call after 3 hours
- Gradually increase temperature in 50 degree intervals



WARNING – We recommend covering your Outdoor Oven between use as it will absorb moisture through Winter and prolonged periods of rain. There are covers available but tarpaulin or plastic sheeting is also fine.

Otherwise the curing process must be repeated to evaporate moisture before using the oven at high temperatures.

WARNING – Never light a fire in a new oven and take the temperature up high, this will lead to damage.

Due to thermal expansion, small cracks may appear in the Dome or Hearth during the curing process. Do not worry; this is normal and the quality of your oven will not be compromised.

To ensure longevity of your oven – it should be protected from rain where possible – long exposure to rain will require the oven to go through the curing process again. We advise a coat of “SANDTEX” Masonry paint to prevent the ingress of moisture. A simple shelter or Rain cover should also be used.

It is perfectly safe and great fun to use on a nice day in the winter, however, you must gradually increase the temperature of the oven – more so than usual.



If you have any doubt - Please call us on 01522 704505 or if you have any questions about this process.

Lighting the fire – after your oven is cured

1. Place some screwed pieces of paper (newspaper is fine) on the floor between two good-sized pieces of kindling (ensure it is dry!) placed lengthwise in the oven and light the paper with a match.
2. Place a handful of kindling across (perpendicular to) the first two pieces of kindling.
3. Once the kindling is well lit - place two split hardwood logs (not too big – about 4 or 5 cm diameter) across the kindling pile and top with one or two more once established and lit. Remember to maintain the crossing pattern so that the air can circulate through the wood – this is very important.
4. Push the woodpile deep into the oven with your pizza peel or poker. The fire should be just back of the centre of the oven. The flames should hit the top of the dome and cascade to the sides.
5. Let this fire burn for approximately 20 minutes, adding several more pieces of wood to keep a large rolling flame going. Your goal is to introduce an appropriate amount of heat into the oven and establish some red-hot logs. You need to burn wood in this manner until you see a small circle directly above the fire that is no longer black (carbon build up from the fire). This “white spot” is your indicator that the oven is ready.



You can either push the fire to the back of the oven, or to the side rear or around the perimeter of the oven.

The Oven should be very hot, keep an eye on your temperature gauge to ensure that the oven does not slip – keep adding logs to maintain heat.

In colder, damper days it will take longer to reach temperature and more logs to maintain it.

NOTE – You may want to consider the use of Gauntlets and Log Hooks to manage your oven fire safely – the oven door gets hot. A temperature gauge is also very useful.

The Secret to success is establishing a smokeless fire, maintaining the heat and having great fun with a new style of cooking.

You can cook incredible Pizzas and Skewered meats, also fantastic breads and cakes. Please take a look at some of our recipes below – but the internet is a great free source for other ideas.



Cedar Planked Salmon in Wood Fired Oven Recipe

2 Pounds fresh Salmon with skin on one side (one nice size filet)

¼ cup Olive oil

¼ cup Butter or margarine

¼ cup Fresh Garlic

1 Orange

Basil (fresh or dry)

Oregano (dry)

Rosemary (fresh)

½ Lime (squeezed)

½ Tsp. Sea Salt

Black pepper (to taste)

Soak the cedar plank for at least 1 hour in cold water. Preheat oven to medium heat (around 350 F).

Wet your hand and wipe across the salmon to clean. Never place fish in water.

Slice three thin slices from the widest part of the orange and reserve for decoration. Squeeze the juice from the remainder of the orange. In a small sauce pan, melt the butter or margarine, add all ingredients to melted butter. Place salmon with this sauce in a zip-lock bag for at least 2 hours in the refrigerator .

Remove salmon from bag and place on plank with the skin side down. Place a couple of tablespoon of the sauce over salmon, Decorate with orange slices and Rosemary. Place the plank on the centre of oven opposite the burning fire.

Cook for 12-18 minutes depending on size/thickness of cut. Place on serving platter or leave on plank. Careful, be sure to use a spatula, the plank will be hot!



Au Gratin Potatoes in Wood Fired Oven Recipe

½ stick butter (3.5 tablespoons)
3 tablespoons all purpose flour
2 cups milk
6 large potatoes
1 onion
1.5 cups cheese (Muenster, Mozzarella or Cheddar)
¼ cup Romano, Parmesan cheese mix

In a sauce pan, melt butter, add flour and stir, add milk in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup increments until a smooth Alfredo sauce forms, add cheese and cook over medium fire until melted. Add salt and pepper to taste. Peel and cut potatoes in $\frac{1}{4}$ inch slices, cut onion in quartered slices. Mix potatoes, onions and cheese sauce, sprinkle Romano, Parmesan cheese mix on top and cook with a medium fire for 90 to 120 minutes.

Basic Italian Pizza Dough Recipe

Most dough recipes in today's "health conscious world" call for vegetable oil or olive oil. Up until the 1970's, lard was often used instead. This recipe is unchanged and lard should be used. It makes a noticeable difference in how this dough rises and bakes to a beautiful golden brown in a wood fired oven.

Ingredients

3 ½ cups unbleached wheat flour
2 tablespoons yeast (in crumbs)
1 ¼ cups warm water
1 tablespoon lard
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon honey

Preparation:

Break up the yeast in a large cup with a half cup of warm water. Add 2 tablespoons of flour and the honey. Leave the mixture in the cup to rise for half an hour in a warm place covered with a kitchen towel. Next, form a mound with the flour and place the yeast "mix" in the middle. Add the lard and warm water, a little at a time, and work with your fingers. Knead all the ingredients for about ten minutes into a soft dough ball. Place the dough in a bowl and let it rise for an hour and a half or until double in size, in a warm place while covered with a kitchen towel or plastic film.

Divide the "risen" dough into 3 equal parts and place in a covered "Tupperware" or similar covered container until ready to use. With well floured hands, hand-toss or, roll out with a rolling pin.

Notes:

This recipe provides three 12 to 14 inch thin crust pizzas.

This recipe can be done in a kitchen mixer with a dough hook. After the yeast has activated (risen), add all the ingredients in the mixer and mix on the lowest speed for 10 to 12 min.



Mexican Pizza Recipe

- 1 Pizza Dough ball(7oz)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small brown onion, finely chopped
- 350g lean beef mince
- 1 cup thick tomato juice

(Chopped tin tomatoes, garlic, oregano – mixed and left overnight to thicken in fridge)

- 125g can sweet corn drained
- 2 tablespoons of passata
- Teaspoon of chilli flakes (optional) or fresh chilli sliced
- 3/4 cup grated tasty cheese (**Mexican Enchilado is ideal**)
- 1 large avocado, halved, stone removed, peeled, mashed
- 1/2 lemon, juiced
- 30g tortilla chips

Method:

1. Fire Wood Burning oven to 350 degrees c
2. Heat oil in a frying pan and sauté onion, stirring for 3 to 4 minutes or until soft.
3. Add the mince and cook for 5 minutes or until browned.
4. Add corn and chilli flakes and prepared tomato juice
5. Season and simmer until thickened slightly.
6. Remove from heat.
7. Press the dough into a 20 cm round.
8. Place the pizza dough on the floured pizza peel
9. Spread with passata
10. Top with mince mixture and cheese.
11. Slide into oven (at 350 degrees c) – turn every 15 to 20 seconds – after 60 seconds slide peel back under pizza and lift to top of oven to melt cheese thoroughly - remove from oven.
12. Combine avocado and a tablespoon lemon juice spoon on to the centre of pizza and garnish with avocado topped by the tortilla chips.



Perfect Tandoor Chicken

1. 500g chicken breast, cut into large pieces
2. Small pot natural yogurt
3. 1 garlic clove
4. Thumb size of fresh ginger peeled
5. 1 Pot of **Mr Huda's (available in most Lincolnshire co-ops and Asda or online – very good!) Tandoori paste** (www.mrhudas.co.uk)
6. Pinch salt and chilli flakes if desired

Method

1. Thoroughly mix all ingredients into a bowl and cover to refrigerate overnight
2. Fire wood oven to 350 degrees c
3. Skewer Chicken pieces onto stainless steel skewers (fire wire skewers ideal)
4. Place onto a baking tray and into hot oven
5. Leave for around 5 minutes – turn half way through
6. Check for doneness in centre of chicken
7. Serve with fresh Nan (or any flat bread) lettuce and onion relish



Greek Kleftiko

The name Kleftiko comes from the fact that the meat is baked in a sealed oven and hence retains its cooking juices. (A modern adaption of this dish is to bake the lamb in baking paper or foil, to obtain a similar effect.) The dish got its name from the word “kleftis” which means “robber” – due to the fact that mountain brigands would cook stolen meat in hidden, underground ovens!

This dish can be replicated (one of Garden Gift Shops favourites!) with huge success using your wood fired oven whilst it is “cooling down” and the door closed.

3-4 kg lamb, cut into large pieces (The lamb in this recipe can be any cut but we recommend shoulder or neck as these make for a more tender kleftiko)

1 kg, potatoes peeled and quartered.

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp pepper.

2 tsp dried oregano (Greek rigani is best if you can find it)*

8 fresh bay leaves

1/2 cup oil

*available at Greek and Continental delis and grocery stores online



Place lamb and potatoes into two baking trays. Mix together salt, pepper and oregano in a small bowl, sprinkle over lamb and potatoes and toss well, rubbing mixture into the meat. Add bay leaves. Pour in water and oil. Cover with foil and bake in the wood fired oven for 3-4 hours... ensure the oven is no hotter than 250 degrees and is cooling!!!

Smoke Roast Salmon (or any fish really!)

1 whole Fish – split into two fillets

4 tablespoons seas salt

1 table spoon cracked black pepper

2 table spoons sugar (caster or brown)

1 bulb fennel

Olive Oil

Pre-soaked wood chips for smoking

Wash your fish carefully, mix the salt, pepper and sugar (reserving a teaspoon of pepper) together and sprinkle over the fish. Allow to “cure” by leaving in the fridge for an hour or 2. Lots of moisture will run out of the fish – this is normal.

Remove from fridge and carefully wash – pat dry and sprinkle with sliced fennel, olive oil and top with black pepper (and dried chillies if you like!).



Ensure Wood oven is at around 250 degrees and no flames, Put Fish in a roasting tray and into oven – through a good couple of handfuls of woodchips (oaks is good) onto the hot embers. Ensure chimney is blocked off with cap and door is shut.

Leave for 10 minutes and remove. Checked thoroughly cooked though and serve hot with a flavoured rice or pasta.