

## All About Seasoning

Every piece of Lodge cast iron cookware comes seasoned and ready to use right out of the box. The easiest way to maintain this layer of seasoning is to use your cookware. Every time you cook an egg, grill a steak, or bake a pie, you're adding layers of baked-on fat and oil that build up over time for a natural, easy-release finish that gets better over time.

### — The Basics

#### What is seasoning?

Seasoning is just oil baked onto cast iron and carbon steel. It gives your cookware that classic black patina. Seasoning forms a natural, easy-release cooking surface and helps prevent your pan from rusting. It may take a little extra care, but a well-seasoned cast iron pan will last for generations.

#### What's the science behind seasoning?

When oil is heated in cast iron, it bonds with the metal through a process called polymerization, creating a layer of seasoning. With regular use, your cast iron cookware will develop a strong, durable layer of seasoning that becomes more resistant to rust and more nonstick—it only gets better over time.

#### What oil does Lodge use to season its cookware?

Lodge uses soy-based vegetable oil to season our traditional cast iron and carbon steel cookware in our foundries. There are no synthetic chemicals added at all. The oil is highly refined, and all proteins that cause soy-related allergies are eliminated. The oil is kosher and contains no animal fat, peanut oil, or paints.

Some cookware may have slight variations in the seasoning finish. These variations do not affect cooking performance and typically even out with use.

#### Clean and oil your cookware after every use.

Some activities may remove a bit of your seasoning, such as cooking acidic foods, using excessive heat, or scrubbing with abrasive utensils or scouring pads; that's why our simple cleaning steps have you rub oil into your pan after each use to ensure the seasoning remains intact for quality cooking.

### — Cleaning and Care

#### How to Clean Cast Iron

##### Step 1: Wash

Wash your cast iron cookware by hand. You can use a small amount of soap. If needed, use a pan scraper for stuck on food. For extra sticky situations, simmer a little water for 1 minute, then use the scraper after the pan has cooled. Our Seasoned Cast Iron Care Kit has everything you need to wash and care for cast iron the right way.

##### Step 2: Dry

Dry promptly and thoroughly with a lint-free cloth or paper towel. If you notice a little black residue on your towel, it's just seasoning and is perfectly normal.

##### Step 3: Oil

Rub a very light layer of cooking oil or Seasoning Spray onto the surface of your cookware. Use a paper towel to wipe the surface until no oil residue remains.

## Are there other oils I can use to season?

All cooking oils and fats can be used for seasoning cast iron, but based on availability, affordability, effectiveness, and having a high smoke point, Lodge recommends vegetable oil, melted shortening, or canola oil, like our Seasoning Spray.

Traditionally, lard was used to season cast iron, and while that is still okay, we do not recommend it unless you frequently use your cookware. If the cookware is stored for too long, lard and other animal-based fats can go rancid.

Whichever oil you choose, the important thing is to make sure you heat up your pan to that oil's smoke point. When the oil hits that smoke point, a chemical reaction occurs, bonding the oil to your pan to create a layer of natural seasoning.

TYPE OF OIL	SMOKE POINT									FLAVOR NEUTRAL?
		SAUTÉING	SEARING	ROASTING	FRYING	BAKING	FINISHING	SALAD DRESSING	SEASONING*	
Avocado Oil (Virgin)	520° F	✓	✓				✓	✓	🔥	No
Safflower Oil	500° F	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	🔥	Yes
Light/Refined Olive Oil	465° F	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		Yes
Rice Bran Oil	450° F	✓	✓	✓	✓				🔥	Yes
Soybean Oil	450° F	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			🔥	Yes
Peanut Oil	450° F	✓	✓	✓	✓				🔥	Yes
Corn Oil	450° F	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			🔥	Yes
Sesame Oil	450° F	✓					✓	✓		No
Sunflower Oil	440° F	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			🔥	Yes
Canola Oil	425° F	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	🔥	Yes
Grapeseed Oil	420° F	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	🔥	Yes
Vegetable Oil	400° F	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			🔥	Yes
Extra-Virgin Olive Oil	375° F	✓		✓			✓	✓	🔥	No
Vegetable Shortening	360° F				✓	✓			🔥	Yes
Coconut Oil	350° F	✓		✓		✓			🔥	No
Flaxseed Oil	225° F						✓	✓		No

• Different oils have different flavor profiles. They also smoke at different temperatures. At Lodge, we recommend adding oil to your cookware after each use and when re-seasoning cookware at home. Before you start, consider your oil's smoke point. Check out the chart above for information on smoke points, neutrality, and helpful cooking suggestions for different oils.

**\*Note:** all cooking oils and fats can be used for seasoning cast iron. We considered availability, affordability, effectiveness, and smoke point to recommend the oils listed with a "🔥" above.

## — FAQs

Will cooking acidic foods in cast iron hurt the seasoning?

Unfortunately, it can. High acidic foods, like tomatoes, can break down the seasoning on cast iron. We recommend avoiding acidic foods or recipes with higher liquid contents for longer periods of time until the seasoning is well established.

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Is the oil that Lodge uses Kosher?

The oil that we use to season our cookware is a Kosher-certified, soy-based vegetable oil. Although the oil is Kosher, Lodge's manufacturing process is not certified Kosher.

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Is the oil genetically modified?

Since 90% of soybeans in the U.S. are genetically modified, "traces" of proteinaceous material can be carried from soybean farm to soybean farm in the extraction process. The oil is, however, highly refined, effectively removing the proteinaceous matter along with the fatty acids, chlorophyll, off-odor, and off-flavor components that are found in soybean oil. If any trace amount remains after that process, it would be so infinitesimal that it would require several gallons of oil to be submitted even to extract any DNA fragments. There is no DNA remaining at this point in processed oils, and when sent off for testing, the analytical report that is received from the GM testing/certification facilities will state that there is "no modified or conventional DNA present." That being said, our supplier cannot state that the oil is GMO-free since the testing results show that there was no modified or non-modified DNA present.

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When drying my cast iron pan, dark residue appeared on my towel. Is this normal?

Yes, this is perfectly normal and safe. Occasionally, when your seasoning works a little too hard with acidic foods or really high heat, dark residue can come off on your towel when cleaning. This can also be present with brand new cookware.

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My new Lodge seasoned cast iron cookware has a "bubble" on the cookware. What is this?

Some new Lodge cookware can have a small "bubble" on the tip of the handle or on the assist handle that can chip away and reveal a brownish color underneath. This is not rust. It is a result of our cookware being seasoned on a hanging conveyor, causing a small drip to form at the bottom. If the bubble makes it through our ovens, it is baked on, and the brown color is simply oil that has not fully carbonized. It is perfectly safe and will disappear with regular use and care.

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The seasoning on my new pan doesn't look even. Is this normal?

Some cookware may have slight variations in the seasoning finish. These variations do not affect cooking performance and typically even out with use.

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Black flakes of seasoning are coming off my pan. What's happening?

Sometimes layers of seasoning may flake off your cast iron pan. This can happen if layers of seasoning have not fully bonded to the metal. If your pan is flaking, don't panic! Simply scrub the pan with a nylon brush, then rinse, hand-dry, and rub with oil. You may want to try seasoning in the oven to help build up a strong layer of seasoning.

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Why is the surface of my cast iron cookware rough?

The texture is a result of the sand casting process that is used, creating a surface finish that has a texture that will allow the seasoning to adhere to it. As you use your cookware over time and continue to season it, the pan will become smoother. Unlike other types of cookware, Lodge cast iron cookware only gets better with use.

Some customers prefer to smooth out the roughness, and it is okay to do so using fine-grade sandpaper. Be sure to season the item promptly after doing so.