



USING & MAINTAINING YOUR ROUND GROVE PRODUCTS BRICK OVEN

Congratulations on your new brick oven! Now is the time to learn more about how to use and maintain your brick oven so it will look good and perform up to your expectations for years to come.

First of all, brick ovens are HOT! There is a burn risk when cooking with fire. Round Grove Products is not responsible for injuries incurred from your brick oven. Care and use are your responsibility!

Second, brick ovens require care and maintenance to look good and perform well. The firebrick and clay mortar absorb moisture from the air. This moisture is the cause of most brick oven failures.

Overheating the brick oven before this moisture evaporates will result in a catastrophic failure meaning, the brick oven will experience a steam explosion that breaks the structure. Round Grove Products is not responsible for injuries incurred from your brick oven. As stated, care and use are your responsibility!

Those are the two most important things to know about brick ovens.

Now, let's review how to use and care for your brick oven so it will perform the way it's intended to work.

1. The first time you use it each week build a small fire in the brick oven and allow any residual moisture build-up to dry out
2. Build a fire in the middle of the brick oven using smaller wood pieces rather than logs or branches. Use quality hardwoods for firing the brick oven, such as oak, walnut, fruitwood, almond, etc. Do not use wax starter logs or lighter fluid as these will damage the fire brick.
3. Once the flue gases warm up, then the flue should draw most of the smoke out through the chimney
4. Build the fire up a little bigger once the smaller fire has taken hold
5. Place the thermal door in the opening and angle it slightly to allow a reasonable amount of air to draw through the brick oven
6. Bring the brick oven up to 700 degrees over a period of about an hour or so
7. Once the brick oven is at a desired temperature, either move the coals to one side or remove the coals into a metallic ash bucket
8. Now it is appropriate to begin cooking – the brick oven should hold the temperature for an hour or two
9. Be certain to use the pizza peel to place the food in the brick oven, to turn the food, or to remove the food from the brick oven. DO NOT REACH INTO THE BRICK OVEN!!! IT IS VERY HOT AND YOU WILL BE BURNED!!!
10. After use, clean out the ashes and any remaining cooking residue with a brush or scraper. Leaving this inside the brick oven will trap moisture inside and attract wildlife both should be avoided!!
11. Use the door to protect the brick oven interior from wildlife or debris when not in use
12. Overwinter with the door in place to protect the interior. The first use after winter should be after three small fires to drive the winter moisture out of the brick and mortar.
13. The thicker the food, the lower the temperature to evenly cook the food without burning the exterior; the lower the temperature, the longer the cooking time. A thin crust pizza will cook in 2-3 minutes in a 700-degree oven. Using thicker crust or vegetable toppings might require 15-25 minutes in a 400-500-degree oven. Roast a large cut of meat at 400-500 degrees. Bake bread at 350-450 degrees.
14. A small temperature gauge may be useful at first to discern the internal temperature. Some cooks put the gauge inside the brick oven; others put the gauge on the chimney to measure the outlet temperature.

Lastly, let's talk about the cast iron door on your new brick oven and how to care for it.

Please note, that it is not uncommon for some rust spots to appear--especially more so if the oven is not being used.

Just like a cast iron skillet, the cast iron door needs to develop a patina finish, which is developed with use over time. The more it is used, the less likely it is to rust!

The cast iron door has a powder-coat finish applied. Cast iron is very porous, so there will always be a little rust in spots--mostly in high exposure spots, such as the hinge-side bezel, the vent slide, and the strike-side rest.

This is a normal maintenance issue for a cast iron door exposed to exterior conditions, which would need to be addressed until the patina finish develops.

If you run into this issue, you can remove the rust organically. We recommend cutting a raw potato and rubbing the rust spots with the raw potato flesh--there is something in there that kills the rust. Then clean up the residue with a damp cloth. There are also chemical products that will remove the rust, but organic alternatives are preferred since this is a cooking device.

In cast iron cookware, it is recommended to cure the skillet with vegetable oil and heat it to 400 degrees for 20-30 minutes. On our cast iron door, we also recommend the vegetable oil procedure, but for persistent rust spots on the EXTERIOR (non-cooking) side of the door, the owner can use some high-heat black spray paint. We recommend spraying it into a disposable bowl and brushing it onto the surface as opposed to spraying directly onto the door or frame.