

Cast iron cookware care and maintenance



The more you use, the more durable the cast iron pot becomes!

Recently, a customer asked: What should I do if the cast iron pot I bought has rusted? I have taught you about boiling and daily maintenance before, but this is the first time I have been asked about rusting. Today, I will discuss it and hope to help those who have the same problem.



1) Why do people love to buy cast iron pots?

I once had a conversation with a fan friend about this issue. She said that at first, she followed the trend and bought roasted European buns. Later, she found that using them to cook and stew dishes was particularly effective, as they cooked quickly and tasted better. In principle, because the material of cast iron pots has good heat storage capacity and the lid is very thick, it is extremely difficult for water vapor to dissipate when cooking with a lid, forming a relatively sealed space inside the pot where steam can flow back. Use it to bake European style bread such as country bread, with a steam baking effect that creates a crispy outer layer and a bouncy inner layer.



Due to its ability to lock in steam and moisture in the pot, it is used for stewing dishes. When stewing food, only a small amount of water is needed (the steam condenses and drips evenly back into the pot) to achieve a great taste and preserve the original flavor of the ingredients. Many of my friends around me use cast iron pots to make "waterless baking" recipes, and the meat is particularly fresh and fragrant.

2) Why do cast iron pots rust?

When iron encounters water molecules, it undergoes oxidation and forms rust.



There are several reasons why cast iron pots can easily rust:

- Not frequently used, put the cast iron pot aside and expose it to the air for a long time
Due to the infrequent use of cast iron pots and the lack of oil protection, water molecules in the air can easily cause rusting of the pots.

- Residual moisture after cleaning
The water vapor generated by stewing and the residual moisture in the iron pot after cleaning can easily cause rusting, so it is necessary to dry the moisture in a timely manner. If the entire pot is made of cast iron material, except for the inside of the pot, the outside of the pot and the handle should be ensured to be dry.

Long term soaking in water

Using a cast iron pot to cook, accidentally burnt it, and there was a burnt black sticky substance inside the pot that couldn't be removed for a while. So, soak the pot in water first, and then forget about it (the first method many people use to deal with burnt pots).

- Excessive cleaning
In order to keep the cookware clean, use a large amount of cleaning agent to wash it, and the grease protective film attached to the pot is washed away, so it is easy to rust. When cleaning cast iron pots, try to use neutral detergents if possible, rather than vegetable cleaners. Do not

use dishwashing detergent, which is alkaline.

How to deal with rusting of cast iron pot?

I have searched online for multiple experience sharing on handling rust stains on iron pots. The processing logic is to first remove rust and then apply an oil film protective layer. The specific method is as follows:

STEP1 Rust Removal

When the cast iron pot has a large amount of rust

The method of high-temperature rust removal: Place the rusted cast iron pot in an oven and bake it at high temperature (about 200 °C -230 °C) for 2-3 hours, allowing the rust to dehydrate under prolonged high-temperature baking. First, naturally remove most of the rust (blow it away with a fan or brush), and do not scald your hands during processing. Friends who use this method must remember that the iron pot is still very hot. Do not rinse it with cold water, let it slowly cool down at room temperature first. Sudden cooling and heating will make the cast iron very brittle.

When the cast iron pot has only sporadic rust spots

Using vinegar and wire brush: Pour a little white vinegar and soak the rust spots for a while, then use a wire brush or vegetable cloth to wash off the rust spots.



STEP2 Rinse

After cleaning the iron pot with water, use kitchen paper towels or a dry cloth to wipe it dry.

STEP3: Creating an oil film protective layer

① Open fire and dry all the moisture on the surface of the iron pot. This step is for heating and drying, and also allows the iron to open its capillary pores, making it easier to absorb the oil and protective film in the next step.



② After heating up (with slight smoke visible), turn off the heat and use a kitchen towel to absorb some sunflower seed oil/rapeseed oil/flaxseed oil (the article will add some knowledge about why these three oils are recommended at the end), then wipe the cast iron layer in the pot while it is still hot. If the entire pot is made of cast iron material, the exterior and handles should be coated to ensure that all corners are covered.



③ Use another kitchen towel to gently wipe off any excess oil residue, otherwise during subsequent heating, the excess oil will form black spots that may not look smooth.

④ Reheating:

Only cast iron pots with cast iron material inside

Turn on medium to low heat, heat until the pot emits a slight smoke (about 5 minutes), then turn off the heat and let it cool naturally.

The whole pot is made of cast iron material

Preheat the oven to 230 °C in advance, place the pot upside down on the grill, bake at 230 °C for 1 hour, and let it cool naturally.



After the reheating step is completed, the grease has filled the small holes in the cast iron material, and a protective oil film has been formed. But this layer of oil film has little anti sticking effect. At this point, when frying food, it is still necessary to add oil first to prevent sticking to the pan.

However, as the number of times the cast iron pot is maintained (i.e. the process of repeated heating and oiling) increases, the non stick performance of the cast iron pot will become better and better. That is to say, the more times it is used (after use, oil film maintenance should be done), the stronger and thicker the oil film will become.

If the cast iron pot is not frequently used, it is best to maintain it once a week to maintain a beautiful iron surface and good non stick performance.