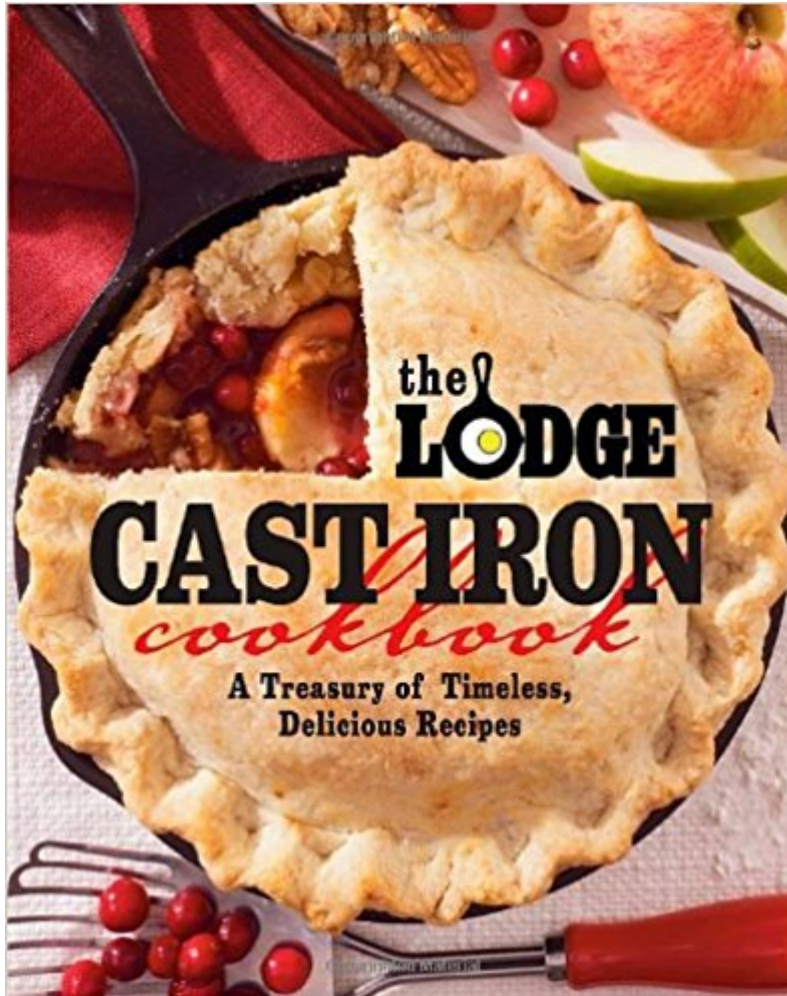


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The Lodge Cast Iron Cookbook: A Treasury Of Timeless, Delicious Recipes



Synopsis

Cast iron cooking is back in vogue! From America's most chic restaurants to the countless kitchens of avid home cooks, everyone is rediscovering the joy of cooking with classic cast iron. Cast iron cooking has always been a kitchen favorite with its even heating, great heat retention and its flexibility to go outdoors and grill or cook over an open fire. According to Esquire magazine, cast iron cookware "will enrich your eggs and burgers, it's impossible to break and it will last longer than you." And now with The Lodge Cast Iron Cookbook, every cook will learn the simple, savory secrets of cast iron cookery. From the kitchens of Lodge, America's leading manufacturer of cast iron cookware, this unique cookbook offers over 200 mouthwatering recipes. The delectable dishes range from breakfast specials to the secrets of great fried food, to soups and stews, biscuits and baked goods, fish, veggies and finally those sweet finales. And the book features favorite cast iron cooking recipes by well-known cooks such as Bill and Cheryl Jamison, Nick Malgieri and Allison Fishman. Special cooking lessons include cast iron cooking basics and how to enjoy open air cooking and grilling. This special culinary delight features great cooking stories and intriguing vignettes on the history and legend and lore of cast iron cooking. Each unique recipe, culled from cooks across the country, is illustrated with four-color photography. Published in a special flexible binding, this cookbook will be a keepsake treasured by all cooks.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have been using cast iron cookware for several years, but this is my first cookbook devoted solely to it. For this review, I'll avoid talking about the advantages of cast iron since those are well

discussed on the product pages for cast iron cookware.

CONTENT - The Lodge Cast Iron Cookbook is paperback, but it has a thick strong cover and binding with a nice matte surface that I think will hold up well in the kitchen after many years. I get my cookbooks pretty dirty, but I think grease should wipe off pretty easily from it. The book is about 80% cast iron recipes, with a lot of short stories from employees and cast iron enthusiasts talking about their love for cast iron or sharing a special memory from cooking with it. There are also a lot of cooking tips scattered throughout that will help ensure your recipes are a success. A few of the stories are mildly interesting, but most I could do without and seem like testimonials that I could just read on the Lodge web site. A lot of things like "I can remember inheriting my grandma Sally's 40-year old cast iron pan and I make her famous peach cobbler in it every year..." But a lot of people who use cast iron develop a somewhat emotional attachment to it, so stories like this can be a nice touch and don't seem to take away from the actual recipes. Most of them are printed in the margins, which is where a lot of cookbooks usually just leave wasted empty space. The book contains a total of 191 recipes plus a dozen or so recipes for sauces, etc. There are 92 color pictures, which I feel is a good ratio to the number of recipes. Maybe a couple dozen of the recipes are reprinted from other cookbooks. Two of the recipes are reprinted from *Simply Suppers: Easy Comfort Food Your Whole Family Will Love*. Some of the recipes are reprinted from *A Skillet Full of Traditional Southern Lodge Cast Iron Recipes & Memories*. Four recipes are reprinted from *Griswold and Wagner Cast Iron Cookbook: Delicious and Simple Comfort Food*. This book has a strong focus on outdoor cooking (almost a fourth of the book). They give tips and details on cooking over a campfire and bean hole cooking (digging a hole in the ground and cooking your food in a pot surrounded by hot coals). I like that they have a table for specifying the number of coals you should have when using a bean hole to ensure the proper cooking temperature. It can be easy to just dump a huge pile of coals on top of your oven and overcook your food, which I have done many times with peach cobbler.

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9. Lodge Cast Iron: A Song for a Cook's Soul - 3 page history of the Lodge company and their values.

17. National Cornbread Festival - 1 page summary of the festival held in Tennessee.

18. Breakfast (16 recipes)

38. Soup, Stew, Gumbo & Chili (23 recipes)

72. The Main Course (55 recipes)

152. Cooking Outdoors (29 total recipes) Gas Grill (14 recipes) Open Fire (12 recipes) Bean Hole (3 recipes)

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RECIPES - I have tried around fifteen of the recipes so far, including several of the Cooking Outdoors recipes, which the book contains a lot of. Overall, the recipes are

very easy to follow and work well. They are not too complex and I feel that most of them are for cooks at a beginner to intermediate level. The recipes don't contain a lot of exotic ingredients that you'll have to go to several different stores to find, which is a plus. For the most part, they are all very traditional, southern recipes that I feel will have a lot of mass appeal.

CONS - The main problem with this book, is that it seems like Lodge decided they wanted to make some money on a cookbook, and/or promote their products, so they just gathered a bunch of the best cast iron recipes they could find and threw them together with little effort for cohesion. I don't have a problem with the cookbook not being entirely original, but I do have a problem in that in order to make all of the recipes by following the instructions, you are going to need to buy about 40 different pieces of cast iron cookware. Lodge's main sellers are their 12" and 8" Skillet. They should have looked at all the recipes, and modified them so that they use a few of the most prominent pieces of cookware. However since the recipes come from different books, they all call for different pan sizes. There is no reason to have 10 recipes using a 10" cast iron pan, and 10 recipes using a 10.5" pan. Realistically, it will make little to no difference if you are using a 10" or 10.5" pan, but you will see that this problem becomes even more prominent as you look at all of the recipes. Several recipes call for a 7 quart dutch oven, and several just call for a "large dutch oven." So what is a "large" dutch oven? If I was the editor, I would have modified all of the recipes to say "10" or 10.5" skillet," or included a page about different sizes. Unless you are a complete beginner, you can figure out which pieces of cookware will work as a substitute, but I just think it would have been nice to spend a little time (literally a few hours) and modify the recipes so they all flow together well. Since they didn't, I will try to below.

The following is a listing of all of the different pieces of cookware mentioned in the book, followed by the number of recipes that use them. When a recipe specified that you could use one or the other type of pan, I attributed it to the most common. If a recipe calls for a generic type of cookware, I have added my own recommendation in parenthesis beside it.

6.5" Skillet (2)
6.5" Skillet (1)
"Medium" Skillet (2) (this is the same as a 10" or 10.5" skillet)
9" Skillet (4)
10" Skillet (27)
10.5" Skillet (10)
12" Skillet (or "large" skillet) (44)
14"-16" Skillet (1)
17" Skillet (1)
Lodge Wonder Skillet (1) (this is a square skillet with raised sides)
Lodge 10.5" Square Skillet (2) (you can use the Wonder skillet for this)
7 cup Skillet (2)
9" Lodge Wedge Pan (1)
Corn Finger Mold (1)
Lodge Drop Biscuit Pan (5)
Dutch Oven (1)
3 Quart Dutch Oven (2)
4 Quart Dutch Oven (2)
5 Quart Dutch Oven (9)
6 Quart Dutch Oven (3)
7 Quart Dutch Oven (26) (a 6.5" dutch oven is fine for all of these recipes)
9 Quart Dutch Oven (1)
10" Dutch Oven (2) (this is a 4 quart dutch oven)
12" Dutch Oven (3) (this is a 7 quart dutch oven)
10.5" Griddle (1)
12" Griddle (2) (either size griddle is okay to use)
Griddle or Skillet (1)
Wok (2)
Aebleskiver (1)
Muffin Pan (4)
10" Grill Pan (1)
Large Grill Pan (4)
Medium Dutch Oven

(3)Lodge Grill Pan & Panini Press (1)Lodge Pizza Pan (1)Lodge Sportsman's Grill (3)5" Camp Dutch Oven (1)12" Camp Dutch Oven (8) (for the cake recipe you will need two of these)14" Camp Dutch Oven (2)As you can see, they really need some consistency in this book. You don't have to have all of that cookware, but you will need to know what to substitute. For the cornbread recipes, it's important that you use the specified size, otherwise your cornbread will be too thin. I would say to make the majority of the recipes in the book, you should have a 10.5" or a Lodge Logic 10-Inch Chef's Skillet, a Lodge Logic L10SK3 12-Inch Pre-Seasoned Skillet (if you can only get one, go for the 12"), a Lodge Logic L8DOL3 Pre-Seasoned 5-Quart Dutch Oven with Loop Handles (the 5 quart), and a Lodge Logic 8-Quart Pre-Seasoned Cast-Iron Camp Dutch Oven (if you want to do any of the outdoor cooking). This will give you enough flexibility to handle most of the recipes. Overall, while I think the recipes in the book are fairly solid, it could have used better editing. If you like making cornbread or cooking outdoors with cast iron, this is the book to get. Update March 6, 2012 - I've had a chance now to compare this book with the other popular cast iron option - The Cast Iron Skillet Cookbook: Recipes for the Best Pan in Your Kitchen. Although I prefer the organization and recipes in that book, I would probably recommend Lodge's over it due to the pictures and the thorough cornbread section.

I'm surprised to see how little other reviewers like this book. I am often the odd-reviewer out. And I'm still sticking with the review I wrote; I enjoyed the book, we've had great eats from the recipes, and the "chatty" parts made me smile. I recently saw a book that was a serious waste of a cook's time, and a FalconGuide that maybe interesting to those who are looking for an option outside this book. Here's the rest of the review: Cast Iron cookery is trendy once again. Perhaps the changes of income and economy remind us that value is often reflected in length of use rather than throw-away products. Cast iron is perhaps the hallmark of this value and Lodge Logic is the rock star of cast iron. Most people know it--if you have any you probably love it! The many applications and ways you can use any piece from Lodge Logic is truly astounding. The arrival of this cookbook is welcome and exciting. A variety of other cookbooks have come on the market at the same time. Don't despair! As trustworthy as their equipment, the Lodge Logic brand on this book does not disappoint. My first spin through the book revealed more recipes of interest than I could possibly make for one review--I always make at least three but time limits me to usually no more than five. My first list included well over 20 selections. Other valuable qualities also showed up during the initial handling of the book. Those of you who read my reviews on a regular basis know how much I dislike cookbooks that are hard to keep open. Novel-style binding is normal in the current market.

This book offers a pleasant surprise. The cover is thicker than the usual sleek, thin format. In addition, the binding is pre-creased to make it easier to stay open. As a result once I popped the book into my holder that also covers the book from splatters I didn't have to touch again. A huge relief for any dishes requiring messy hands. The pages are also heavier than many books on the market right now. Although you may look at the price and consider it a bit pricey, the publishing values are designed to hold up for longer than any of the competition. Even better, I easily predict a number of these recipes will become standards in your house. Best of all, you can reproduce most of them indoors or out thanks to versatile cast iron. All of the recipes tested met with positive feedback. Although the Simple Berry Skillet Cobbler really won the taste testers over and introduced interesting ways to use a skillet, there was one recipe no one could resist. In fact, it even got an embarrassing nickname. Polish Pork and Cabbage Stew is one of those rare recipes that is easy, manageable, with to-die-for results. Yes, it has a few steps but none of them are hard at all and well worth the process. Visit your local health food store or upscale market for the small amount of juniper berries needed. I was literally able to buy just the 12 needed so the cost wasn't an issue.

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