



**CHICAGO BRICK OVEN**



USER MANUAL



## CHICAGO BRICK OVEN

**WELCOME**  
to a whole new way  
of  
**ENTERTAINING**



### Curing Your Oven

The initial fire must be started slowly. This is a very tedious process, but also very important! Failure to follow these instructions exactly as written may cause permanent damage to your oven and may void your warranty.

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

When lighting the first fire, keep the flames low so the moisture can be slowly released from the oven and the surrounding masonry work. *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.*

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. Exposing your new oven to this temperature over a few days will cause all the moisture to evaporate so that your oven properly "cures."

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

Another method of curing your new oven is to build a fire in a separate location. Then take the coals and place them into the oven. You'll generate heat without the flame and the oven will cure as required. Some new owners find this method a much easier way to cure the oven and ensure the temperature doesn't get too hot.

**NOTE:** Cook in your oven *at least two times* before actually sampling what you've cooked. Test-bake some basic bread dough on the Hearth and throw it out each of the first two times. Then, you can begin enjoying what you have cooked in your new oven.



## Firing Your Oven

Once you've properly cured your oven, you're ready to fire it for cooking.



- Always start with dry kindling placed at the front of the oven. Never use chemicals or starter fluids; you will not need them.
- Once the fire is going, add small pieces of wood to build the fire. You want to raise the temperature slowly, so avoid building a huge fire that pours out of the mouth of the oven.



We recommend adding large chunks of wood (see photo below, left) to the fire once it's going strong. Add these chunks and start moving the fire to the back of the oven—about 20 minutes after the fire is going.



- You'll notice the oven Dome turning black. As the temperatures rise and more heat is stored in the Dome, it will turn a whitish grey. Your goal is to heat the oven in a way that the entire Dome turns whitish grey.



## Cooking in Your Oven

Once the oven has been heated to the point the entire Dome has turned a whitish grey, you're ready to cook using either the Open-Door or Closed-Door method.

### Open-Door Cooking

Keep the fire going in the back of the oven. Sweep out the front of the Hearth with a wire brush and you're ready to cook. The oven will become hot enough and stay hot with a small fire. For pizzas, the oven will stay hot enough—the purpose of the flame is to melt the cheese and crisp the top.

### Closed-Door Cooking

Spread the fire throughout the oven. You will store heat in the Hearth and Dome by burning your fire hot for at least one hour. The longer you burn your fire, the more heat will be stored in the Hearth and Dome and the longer you'll be able to cook.

The entire Dome of the oven should turn a whitish grey. Once the fire has burned down, remove all coals and ashes into your ashbin. Sweep the Hearth and run a barely wet mop across it to remove all ash. Load your oven with breads, roasts or casseroles and seal the oven with the insulating door.

**Note:** For Closed-Door Cooking, the quality of the wood isn't a concern; you're mainly concerned with building heat and storing it in the oven. However, never use treated woods. Save your flavored woods for Open-Door Cooking!

## Maintaining Your Oven

Following these maintenance and operating tips will help keep your oven at its peak performance.

- The inside of the oven is self-cleaning. If cheese from a pizza or sauce from a roast spills onto the bottom tiles, simply push some glowing coals over the spills and they will disappear.
- Sweeping the flue once a year is recommended and is an easy, do-it-yourself project.
- Always use dry wood (dried for at least two years). If you see moisture coming from the logs while they are on the fire, the wood is not dry. *Using wood that's not dry will cause the oven to throw off a considerable amount of smoke and can also cause damage to the oven because of the high moisture content.*
- If the outdoor temperature is cold or below freezing, take extra time to slowly heat your oven. You do not want to "shock" your oven by taking it from freezing to 600°F in a matter of minutes; the fire should be built-up over at least one hour. Start with a small fire and carefully add more firewood to gradually bring up the temperature.



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