

Care and Use of your Le Creuset



You wouldn't drive a new car without familiarising yourself with the various features ... indicators, windscreen wipers etc would you? OK, new saucepans and cookware don't cost quite as much and you're unlikely to do quite so much damage if you use them incorrectly, but having taken the time and trouble to select your new cookware, which can be relatively expensive, it would be a terrible shame to ruin it within the first week just for the sake of not reading a few instructions ...

Each Le Creuset items comes with a care and use leaflet and where you'll find the following information reiterated ... it's an idea to keep this leaflet, until you're completely familiar with your new cookware but in the meantime ...

Cooking Temperature

Cast iron is a relatively poor conductor of heat. That's not exactly the kind of statement you'd expect from someone trying to sell you cast iron pans, but there it is ... the reason I tell you this is that it's crucial if you want the best from your cast iron cookware. It's true that cast iron is a relatively poor conductor, but it's also true that, for exactly this reason, once heated it retains heat incredibly well and herein lies its strength ... once warm, the cast iron stays warm, evenly, for a long time.

- To get the best out of your cast iron you should heat it slowly, using only a medium heat, never a high one. Heat slowly and the heat will spread evenly, heat quickly and the cast iron will heat in one place faster than the remainder, causing a hot spot. Hot spots cause burnt food and you don't want that.

(Incidentally, in inferior products, hot spots can also cause distortion of the base which in turn can lead to hot spots ... bear this in mind with your other cookware if you find food always sticks to the same spot on a pan this may be the cause. You won't have this problem with Le Creuset cast iron ...)

- Once the cast iron is heated it will retain its heat extremely well, so you'll only need to use low or medium heat settings to maintain the ideal cooking temperature. Using only low or medium heat will also reduce the likelihood of food sticking to your pan which could make it difficult to clean and would certainly spoil your meal.
- Always use the cookware on the appropriate size of heat source, that is the heat source as close as possible in size to the size of the base of your pan. You really won't do yourself any favours by putting a small pan on a large ring on a hob ... as we've already discussed, you need to heat cast iron slowly to get the best out of it, so why waste the extra energy or risk overheating the sides of the pan and even damaging the handle if it's a wooden one...



- Using the correct temperature is absolutely essential if your cast iron has a nonstick coating as hotspots can cause the nonstick to break down ... See our article on nonstick frying pans for more information.
- Poterie products can be used in an oven up to 500°F/260°C/Gas 9 but should either not be used on stove tops or be used with caution.

Heat Source



Le Creuset Cast Iron products can be used on *all* heat sources including induction, halogen, ceramic, gas, electric ring and solid plate, and agas or rayburns. They have been tested and approved by the good Housekeeping Institute for use on glass topped stoves. There is no “best” heat source, only a best method of heating ... slowly ...

Le Creuset Poterie should either not be used on stove tops or be used with caution. Poterie is suitable for any type of oven.

Cooking Utensils

Le Creuset cast iron is coated in a vitreous enamel which is extremely tough and durable but the glass like nature of the enamel can be damaged if knocked hard enough (don't try it to see how hard is enough ... just take our word for it!)

- Used “normally” you'll find it extremely difficult to damage, but to limit the chances you should use only wooden plastic or heat resistant nylon tools.
- Don't worry though, even if you do damage the enamel your cookware will still be perfectly safe to use and the performance won't be impaired ... it will just take on a well used and “lived in” appearance, a bit like a well loved teddy bear!
- If your handles are metal you'll need to use a pot holder or oven glove to lift them (common sense really).
- Never put your hot pans directly on to unprotected work surfaces ... use a trivet, board or cloth.
- If your hob is ceramic or halogen you should always lift your cookware (never slide) as you may scratch the surface.
- Don't bang your pots or pans against a hard surface as the enamel may chip.
- Don't drop pots or pans onto the floor. Poterie may break if dropped onto a hard floor, but even cast iron pans could break if a long handle takes the full force of the landing (the weakest point of the pan is the joint between the pan and the handle and if the handle takes the force of the landing the two may become separated, even if dropped onto carpet)!



Handles

Le Creuset products come with handles made in a range of different products either integral cast iron handles, heat resistant plastic (also called phenolic) handles, some older products had wooden handles and some poterie items have integral handles.



- You should always use an oven glove, mitt or dry cloth to lift either cast iron handles or poterie.
- Both cast iron and plastic handles can be placed in a dishwasher, as can poterie products.
- If your product has wooden handles you must take care to not allow them to come into contact with naked flames, hot ovens or hot plates. Wooden handles should not be placed in dishwashers.
- Le Creuset cast iron comes with a lifetime guarantee and, over a lifetime, the handles and knobs may gradually loosen. This is not a defect but you should check them and carefully tighten as needed. Please don't hesitate to ask us for assistance if you're unsure how to correctly tighten handles.

Cleaning



Before using your Le Creuset for the first time you should wash it in warm soapy water, rinse and dry it thoroughly ...

Having read this guide, you'll understand the importance for your cooking, of using the correct temperature but now consider it from a different angle - If you overheat the pan, food sticks. If food sticks it's more difficult to clean off.

- Assuming you've used the correct temperature you'll only need to use hot soapy water but you must make sure the pan has cooled before washing. Once washed, rinse and dry thoroughly.
- NEVER fill your hot pot or pan with cold water, or plunge into water for soaking. The sudden change in temperature may cause a condition called "Thermal Shock" which will pop off patches of enamel the next time the pan is heated.
- If food is stuck to your pan, and won't wash off normally, you can use a plastic or sponge scourer. You shouldn't use metal scourers or abrasive cleaners as they may damage the enamel coating.
- Le Creuset also produces a "Pots and Pans" cleaner, for really stubborn stains and discolouration caused by some foods such as curries. We also find the Demeyere cleaner is excellent.
- Always dry your Le Creuset thoroughly, don't leave it to drain or put away whilst still damp. If you do leave your pans to drain, you may well get rust leaching out between

the top edges of the pan ... this rust won't damage your pan, but is unsightly and can be removed safely using one of the cleaners listed above.

- If your cookware has metal or plastic handles it's dishwasher safe. Wooden handled products should not be put in a dishwasher as the handle will deteriorate.

Freezer to Oven

Le Creuset Poterie is freezer proof, but you should use common sense and take care to follow these simple guidelines. Sudden changes in temperature may cause your pots and pans to crack so avoid them.

- When using your dishes from freezer to oven NEVER place a frozen dish in a preheated oven.
- Always place your frozen dish in a cold oven, turn the oven on to the desired temperature setting and let the dish and the oven heat up together.
- Obviously, you should never place a hot dish in the freezer ... allow to cool first.



Spare Parts

In the unlikely event that you need them, spare parts are available. Either visit our website: www.aolcookshop.co.uk or contact Le Creuset directly for more information.

Guarantee

Le Creuset offer a lifetime guarantee on cast iron products (10 years for nonstick coated) and so long as you follow these guidelines you really will be rewarded with a lifetime of service.

Further Information

If you have any questions, before or after you buy you can contact us:

- by telephone 01737 242302 (Reigate) or 01932 865508 (Cobham)
- by email to info@artoflivingcookshop.co.uk

or by visiting one of our shops in either Cobham or Reigate, where our experienced and knowledgeable staff will be happy to help.

You can also contact Le Creuset directly

- on 0800 373792 or
- by email to helpline@lecreuset.co.uk.