



Instructions for Curing Your Rookery Pizza Oven

Curing your pizza oven is critical to your oven's longevity and performance. Failure to follow these instructions can result in damage, up to and including cracking the dome, which could severely impact heat retention.

Why proper curing is so important?

When cast, your oven contains a high ratio of water to concrete that has to be baked out of the oven. This curing process actually strengthens the dome, when done properly. However, if the oven gets too hot too fast, that water seeks to escape the entire dome's thickness simultaneously and can result in cracking the dome.

Also, after your oven is installed, there is still a great deal of moisture in the mortars, hearth concrete, vermiculite, and the oven chamber and vent. Each of these oven components was recently produced using an air-drying, water-based process. Simply letting the oven stand for a week or two does not 'cure' the moisture out of the oven.

How do we cure the oven?

Important Note: While it is difficult to maintain consistent, low-temperature fires, it is critical for proper curing that you do not go above these temperatures during the first two days.

It is important that you cure your pizza oven slowly over a 5-day period.

Build a series of five increasingly larger fires, starting with a low temperature. *The first-day fire is no more than kindling and thin strips of wood.*

Day 1: 300°F for 6 hours *(longer is better)*

Start and maintain the fire in the center of the interior dome wall, not on either side or back of the oven. You don't want the fire to get too high and touch the dome as direct contact with the fire will spike temperatures.

You won't put the door all the way in the oven, but rather use it as a windbreak allowing about a 1-inch gap once the fire is lit. Lean the door back on its handle allowing the temperature gauge to get an accurate temperature. Also, this will help direct the smoke up the vent because at lower temperatures the wood will not burn off the impurities as fast.

Use the analog temperature gauge provided in the oven door. The temperature gauge reads the oven's air temperature. For a more accurate temperature reading of brick ovens' refractory surfaces, you can use a Digital Infrared Thermometer.

You want to measure the temperature at the dome of the oven, not the side wall or floor. This will be the hottest point of the oven. The temperature can vary slightly, but try not to exceed the temperature for that day's cure schedule by more than a few degrees, better to be 20 degrees cooler than hotter. Especially on day one and two.

Close the oven door every evening to preserve dryness and heat.

Day 2: Repeat process at 350°F

Day 3. Repeat at 400°F

Day 4. Repeat at 450°F

Day 5. Repeat at 500°F

Important Notes:

Use solid wood fuels only.

DO NOT use charcoal, pressure treated timber, chipped wood products, sappy wood such as pine, laminated wood, or any material other than dry, medium or hard firewood.

DO NOT use liquid fuel to start or maintain a fire.

You can start the fire with an acetylene torch if you have one handy.

Food grade fire starters are considered acceptable aids when starting a fire.

Never use water to lower the temperature inside the oven, or to extinguish the fire. This will increase wear and tear on your oven and can lead to "spalling", pitting, and cracking.

If you notice a black smoke coming from the oven, don't panic, it is only sunflower oil which is used in the de-molding process. The smoke may be a little heavy for the first 2 days and will dissipate through the rest of the curing process.

Congratulations! Your oven is complete and ready to begin Cooking.

Enjoy baking in your Rookery Wood Fired Oven!