

Field Skillets arrive “pre-seasoned.” What does this mean? Do I need to season it again before use?

Before your skillet arrives, we oven-season it three times at the factory using organic grapeseed oil. This kickstarts the seasoning process for you and means you can begin cooking on your pan right away, with minimal sticking. Once you receive your skillet, there’s no need to oven season it again; instead, just start cooking.

How do I break in my Field cast iron?

Field Skillets arrive pre-seasoned, so you can start using your pan right away. The best way to build up seasoning is just by cooking with your skillet; each time you use your pan, it will develop a little more seasoning on its surface. Dishes like cornbread, roasted vegetables or anything fried are particularly good at this.

All cast iron skillets take a little time to become truly non-stick, and every pan develops seasoning differently, depending on how often (and what) you cook. Whether it takes a few months, or more, time and use are always the key to getting that slick, even seasoning you’re looking for.

We recommend reading through [this page](#) for more information on how to break in your Field Skillet and begin the seasoning process. And if you’d like to go the extra mile and try your hand at oven seasoning, we recommend following our [cast iron seasoning instructions](#).

What should I cook first in my Field Skillet to help it develop seasoning?

While your skillet will arrive pre-seasoned, cast iron isn’t truly non-stick until it has been used over the course of a few months and built up dozens of interlocking layers of seasoning. To kickstart this seasoning process, we recommend cooking some dishes that will help easily add seasoning to your pan during its first few weeks of use. Dishes like [cornbread](#), roasted or sauteed vegetables, [focaccia](#) or anything fried are great for this. You can find a [full list of dishes](#) (and recipes) we recommend for breaking in your cast iron and building up seasoning [here](#). If you’re cooking something a little more lean early on, like chicken breast or fish, it’s best to use some extra oil or fat.

How should I clean my Field cast iron?

Let’s get this out of the way first: cast iron can rust. That means no soaking, no drip-drying, and *never* put it in the dishwasher.

We’ve put together a list of simple steps that will make cleaning your cast iron easy, and help you build up sturdy seasoning. You can find our step-by-step guide to cleaning your cast iron cookware [here](#).

Can I use soap on my skillet?

Yes, absolutely! The idea that you can't use soap to clean your cast iron comes from the days when many soaps contained lye, which damages seasoning. These days, most dish soaps are totally fine for use on your cast iron, and can often help remove sticky oil residues. So soap away!

Do I really need to use chain mail to scrub my pan?

In short: *YES!* We love the smoothness of Field Skillets, but the reality is that cast iron needs a little bit of texture so that seasoning can actually grip on to it. Lightly scouring your pan with a chain mail scrubber each time you clean it provides enough texture without ruining the smooth feel of the surface. And, chain mail leaves the right amount of stuff behind; it removes loose seasoning that you don't want, while leaving well-bonded seasoning alone.

What kind of towel should I use to apply seasoning oil?

For everyday seasoning, we recommend using a paper towel or rag that you don't mind getting dirty. When applying seasoning oil you want something that won't leave behind lint and can be used on a warm surface, so you might want to test out a few different options to find one that works for you. (For this reason, we don't recommend using cheap paper towels, which will leave lots of fibers, or microfiber cloths, which might melt on a hot skillet.) If you can find something that's recycled, to minimize waste and environmental impact, that's even better.

When I wipe the seasoning onto my pan, it leaves a dark residue on the towel. Is this OK?

This dark residue that might come off the surface of your pan is burnt (aka carbonized) oil or fat; it's common to all cast iron skillets, and is not harmful to you. If you ever have a lot of this burnt oil, all you need to do is wash your pan with a little soap, water and a stiff brush (the soap is key to removing any oily residue). It's possible that even after washing you'll still see some of this residue coming off your pan when you wash it, but that's okay. **JUST KEEP COOKING**, and your skillet will continue to build layers of new seasoning.

My seasoning looks...ugly. Am I doing something wrong?

Some unevenness in color is totally normal (and expected) when using a newer pan. breaking in a pan. Cast iron skillets develop a dark, even patina with time and use—this is the seasoning that makes them nonstick. But, as with a new pair of jeans, there's a breaking-in process. As you continue using your pan, any uneven patches or discolored spots will become incorporated into new layers of seasoning, and the surface of your pan will even out and darken overall.

Simple as it may sound, the real solution to the problem is to JUST KEEP COOKING! It can often take a few months of using your pan to get it to the dark, non-stick surface that you expect from cast iron. In general, it's best to cook with a little more fat or oil in the first few weeks of using your pan, because this will help speed up seasoning. You can read more about breaking in cast iron [here](#).

I've done everything right, why won't my pan build seasoning?

No two pans are exactly alike, and they all develop seasoning differently as well. If your skillet is seasoning really slowly, it's not the pan's fault. It just means that at some point something you cooked removed some seasoning, and you need to continue using your skillet to continue breaking in your skillet.

Every time you cook in your pan, it will either lose or gain a little bit of seasoning, depending on what you're cooking, how much fat you use, and how hot the pan gets, among other variables. If you're having trouble encouraging seasoning to develop, we recommend the following:

1. Follow [our guide](#) to cleaning your cast iron. If you're not regularly scrubbing your skillet with chain mail, this might be why your pan is having trouble building seasoning; your pan's cooking surface needs a bit of texture for seasoning to adhere, which the chain mail provides.
2. Avoid cooking acidic ingredients or simmering salty liquids for a long time in a new pan. If possible, it's also best to avoid super high heat when cooking in a skillet that doesn't have a lot of seasoning yet; just stay below 450 degrees. (But once your pan is well-seasoned, feel free to let her rip.)
3. If you're seasoning your skillet in the oven, stop. Seasoning a pan in the oven too often creates a brittle layer of seasoning that doesn't adhere well and is more prone to flaking. We recommend oven seasoning only when you're rehabilitating a pan that has been totally stripped of seasoning, or had some rust on it.

The answer to your problem is to JUST KEEP COOKING. Use some extra oil or fat while cooking, check out our [recipes for building up seasoning](#), and give your pan a few more months (seriously, it might take that long).

The seasoning on my pan is flaking off. What did I do wrong? And how do I fix it?

Flaking occurs when you have thick layers of seasoning build up without having the time and use to properly bond to the iron. This is why we recommend building up seasoning through cooking; it creates thin, interlocking layers of seasoning in different areas of your pan, which are much less likely to flake off later. (And if you're using flaxseed oil to season your skillet, this could also cause the flaking. Switch to grapeseed oil or, even better, [our seasoning oil!](#))

To remove flaking seasoning, we recommend the following steps:

1. Use a chain mail scrubber to lightly scuff the entire cooking surface of the pan (if you don't have a chain mail scrubber, the edge of a metal spatula is the next best option). You're aiming for an amount of pressure that scuffs the pan, removes anything loose, but doesn't make deep scratches or gouges. Focus extra effort on any bare patches, and don't be afraid to go a little harder on any seasoning that is flaking off.
2. Wash the pan with water removing any residue, dry the pan on the stovetop over medium heat.
3. Apply a thin coating of seasoning oil, then wipe most of it away.
4. Cook your next meal.

Repeat these steps every time you use your pan!

The goal here is to remove any unstable seasoning, so you're not building up new seasoning on top of stuff that's loose. If your seasoning looks patchy after removing the flaking, that's okay! If you JUST KEEP COOKING, you'll fill in these areas with new seasoning, and the surface of the skillet even back out with time and use.

How often do I need to season my pan in the oven?

You really don't need to oven-season your skillet. It's helpful if you're rehabilitating a skillet that was rusty, or you totally stripped your cast iron of seasoning, but in general it can hurt more than it helps. Instead, we prefer the sturdy, thin layers of seasoning that develop from cooking in your skillet.

If you do feel the need to season your pan in the oven, we recommend following our instructions here; and make sure you use only a very thin layer of the right kind of seasoning oil.

What kind of oil should I use to season my skillet?

Our number one choice for seasoning a skillet is our proprietary blend of Cast Iron Seasoning Oil. Comprised of organic grapeseed oil, organic sunflower oil and beeswax, this formula is the perfect consistency for easy and accurate application, and it's high in polyunsaturated fats. (Polyunsaturated fats are what allow an oil to easily bond with cast iron, and make it better for seasoning.)

If you don't have our seasoning oil just yet, then we'd recommend using grapeseed oil, or whichever oil in your pantry has the highest polyunsaturated fat content. We *don't* recommend using flaxseed oil; while flaxseed oil is high in polyunsaturated fats just like grapeseed oil, it's prone to creating a more brittle seasoning that flakes easily.

I seasoned my pan in the oven and it got all sticky and developed a weird pattern. What went wrong?

If you're seeing a spotted or spider web-like pattern, or raised, sticky residue on the surface, this means you used too much oil while seasoning. When we say use a thin layer of oil to season your skillet, we mean really *really* thin. Your skillet should still have a matte finish after you've applied seasoning oil to it; this goes for whether you're wiping your skillet down with oil after cleaning, or if you're seasoning it in the oven. Once you've coated your pan with oil, wipe it down well with a clean paper towel to remove any excess oil.

If you have some raised or sticky residue on your pan, this is just oil that hasn't fully polymerized (aka turned into seasoning). First, we recommend heating your pan up in the oven or on the stovetop until it's no longer sticky. From there, the solution is to JUST KEEP COOKING. As your pan develops new seasoning, any spots or textured areas will even back out.

I left my pan on the stove too long and the seasoning burned. Is it ruined?

One of the great things about cast iron is that it's super resilient, and you really can't mess it up! Your skillet will be just fine.

If you left your pan on the burner too long, coat the skillet all over with a thin layer of seasoning oil. The next few times you cook in your pan, go a little easy on it. Cook foods that will help add seasoning ([here are some suggested recipes](#)). After a few weeks of frequent use, your pan should return to normal. (If you really really burned your pan, and the seasoning is flaking off, just see our recommended steps on [this page](#).)

Why did my pan rust if I didn't leave any water on it?

You can't have rust without moisture, and all cast iron can rust when exposed to water. The first step is to identify where this water is coming from, so you can prevent your pan from rusting in the future. Here are the most common causes of rust:

- 1. Not drying your pan thoroughly.** After you wash your skillet and wipe it dry, it's important to heat it on the stovetop for a few minutes. This will evaporate any lingering moisture inside the pores that you can't see.

2. Not applying seasoning oil. Once you've dried your pan, apply a thin coat of seasoning oil all over. This will protect your pan from any ambient moisture it might encounter before its next use.

3. Improper storage. Make sure your skillet is kept in a cool, dry place; people often keep their pans in garages, which are prone to becoming really humid in the summer. So even if you think your skillet is stored in a dry area, double check! Could water get splashed on it from the sink? Do you store other dishes near it that might not be completely dry when they're put away?

How do I remove rust?

Unless you're doing serious cast iron restoration, then the rust you're dealing with is likely only surface level. The first thing you should try is just wiping your pan down with an oiled paper towel. There's a good chance this will remove light surface rust. If that doesn't quite get everything, we recommend the following steps:

1. Using a stiff brush or the rough side of a dish sponge, scrub off surface rust under cold water. (Cold temperature helps prevent the rust from re-forming quickly). Scuff with chain mail scrubber to prepare the now raw surface to accept new seasoning.

2. Towel dry the skillet and heat it on the stovetop for three to five minute to evaporate any remaining moisture.

3. Lightly coat a paper towel or rag with seasoning oil and wipe down the pan until the rust is no longer visible.

4. If you're no longer seeing rust on the pan surface, you're ready to re-season in the oven. One or two coats of seasoning oil should have your pan back in top shape. From there, you're ready to keep cooking!

If you need to, repeat steps 1 through 3 a few times before seasoning your skillet in the oven. Still seeing some rust even after a few tries? Shoot us an email at help@fieldcompany.com.