# Frequently Asked Questions

**HOW LONG DOES THE OVEN TAKE TO HEAT UP?**

The optimum oven-cooking temperature for most dishes is 300°C-400C, and the time it takes to reach this temperature varies between each oven size. The 80 cm ovens and will take approx. 30 - 45 minutes depending on the type of wood used and how protected the oven is from the elements. The more practised you become with the lighting and positioning of the fire, the quicker it gets. But the longer the fire burns, the better heat retention you get in the oven.

**WILL THE FLUE PIPE BE SAFE TO TOUCH WHEN THE OVEN IS WORKING?**

No. The flue pipe can retain heat for long periods of time even after the fire has gone out.

**WHAT ARE THE OVENS MADE FROM?**

The ovens are made from castable refractory cement, which can withstand extreme heat reaching 500+ degrees Celsius.

**IS THE OVEN WEATHERPROOF?**

If your oven is not undercover it is advisable to place a tarp or cover over it during the very wet months and by keeping the door off this will allow any moisture build-up to evaporate. Keeping your oven dry will ensure that your oven works efficiently and it will also prolong the life of your oven. We can also supply covers for your oven.

**HOW CAN I TELL HOW HOT THE OVEN IS?**

You can purchase an infra-red laser thermometer gun to gauge the oven temperature. However, after a few uses, many people find they can judge and manage the oven temperature in a similar way to a barbecue.

**WHAT TYPE OF WOOD SHOULD I USE?**

We recommend good quality seasoned, dried hardwood for a better heat output; these woods tend to produce less smoke and residue. Woods like tassie oak, box, eucalypt, redgum, or most fruit woods are fantastic. For hotter and more efficient burning, it is recommended to use wood that has a moisture content of less than 25%.

**IF I HAVEN'T USED MY OVEN FOR AWHILE, WILL IT STILL BE OKAY TO USE?**

Absolutely, although it's a good idea to light a small fire to slowly warm the oven before you want to start cooking to " part cure " your oven again.

How do I put the fire out?

Simply close the oven door. This will block the oxygen supply to the fire, extinguishing it in just a few minutes.

**CAN I COOK MEATS AND FISH DIRECTLY ON THE OVEN FLOOR?**

We recommend that meat and fish or any dish that will produce fat or liquid from cooking should be placed in a container to avoid tainting the oven floor.

**CAN I USE NORMAL FIRELIGHTERS?**

No. All firelighters should be free from kerosene or other additives that may soak into the floor of the oven and, in turn, taint the taste of your food.

**WHY AM I GETTING LOTS OF BLACK SMOKE?**

Make sure you are using properly seasoned hardwood, ideally with a moisture content of less than 25%. This type of wood burns hotter for longer periods and produces very little smoke and ash.

**WHY IS MY PIZZA BASE STICKING TO THE OVEN FLOOR?**

First of all, remember to sprinkle the pizza base with flour or semolina and make sure your preparation area is floured well. Don't wait too long to cook after adding your topping to the dough as it could start to soak it up and become sticky. Make sure you don't have any holes or thin spots in your pizza base as these can allow moisture to penetrate and cause sticking.

**MY FIRE KEEPS GOING OUT, WHAT AM I DOING WRONG?**

Make sure the oven door is removed to allow a free flow of air. Closing the door restricts the oxygen supply and will extinguish a fire within a few minutes.

**HOW DO I CLEAN AND MAINTAIN MY OVEN?**

The ovens are largely self-cleaning due to the high temperatures that they reach, making maintenance very simple. Any bugs and bacteria will be killed off by the high temperatures, and for any hard-to-remove stains you can use a damp – not wet – cloth to remove them. Other than sweeping out the ash after use, no further cleaning is needed, although the flue will require cleaning occasionally, which can be done using a flue brush. If you haven't used your oven for a while it is worth starting a fire and allowing it to slowly reach a high temperature to ensure that it is clean before you start cooking with it again.

**CAN I MOVE MY OVEN WHEN THERE IS A FIRE BURNING IN IT?**

No. This is extremely dangerous.

**CLEANING & CARE OF YOUR OVEN**

One you have finished cooking clean your oven floor regularly by raking the remainder of the fire to the front of the oven across the floor tiles.

Leave the door off over night.

In the morning push back the coals and ensure the oven floor is clean of any food substitutes.

Then place the door back on.

Clean Or Cool. Clean the oven floor with an old damp tea towel or a string mop. (Keep just for use in your oven) This will clean, but can also be used to cool down the oven if it gets to hot and you need to reduce the heat fast.

**OVENS NOT UNDER COVER**

If your oven is not under cover it is advisable to purchase a cover or place a tarp or cover over it during the very wet months.

Keeping the door off this will allow any moisture build up to evaporate.

Keeping your oven dry will ensure that your oven works efficiently and it will also prolong the life of your oven.

**OVERLOADING WITH WOOD**

Do not abuse the oven by over loading with wood and trying to use it as your main heat source during cooler months. Remember it is an oven and **not a heater**. You can damage the interior and cause cracking.

**OVEN CRACKS**

Most cracking that you can see in your oven is common and quite normal.

With the extremely high temperatures that can be reached and the intensity of the natural wood burning heat source, your oven goes through a “settling in stage” where some expansion will take place.

During the “settling in stage” it is not uncommon for expansion cracks to appear. These cracks are under no circumstance structural defects and will not affect the performance or durability of your oven.