

- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. I've had cast iron pans since I can remember, but I didn't use them for a long time. Why? Well, I was absolutely convinced I would ruin them because I had listened to all the misinformation that floats around about cast iron. If you've ever looked online for recommendations on how to care for your pans, well, it won't take long for you to start thinking that your cast iron skillets are delicate little flowers that should only be admired from afar. I'm debunking the most annoying cast iron myths today and if you've ever been too nervous to use your cookware, this is an episode not to miss. I'm your host Jill winger and for the last 10 years I have been helping people just like you who feel disenchanting by modern life. I'll help you create the life you really want by learning how to grow your own food and master old fashioned skills.
- Speaker 1: [01:15](#) You had got to love the internet. It'll give you all the advice, some really good and some really bad. There is so much conflicting information out there about really everything, but especially cast iron cooking. So I have sorted through the noise to bring you this list. Let's dive right in. So cast iron myth number one, if you're going to use cast iron, it's always going to be a sticky mess. This does not have to be true in any way, shape or form. A properly seasoned cast iron pan will repel sticky food just fine. Now is it exactly the same as a Teflon pan? Eh, not necessarily. And so you can't expect it to work in the exact same way. However, I have the unique talents of being able to stick food to Teflon as well. So I feel like it's kind of six of one a half dozen of the other.
- Speaker 1: [02:24](#) Now the reason that it's worth the little extra work it takes to make cast iron, quote unquote nonstick, is because Teflon pans or any of those nonstick coatings, they're kind of icky. And the fumes that they emit are not good for you. They're not good to breathe. So ditch the nonstick and take the time to learn how to use cast iron properly. It's not only going to be better for you, but it doesn't take a whole to get them functioning very well and almost as good as Teflon. Maybe even a little better. The key to a nonstick cast iron pan is to season it properly and then even with a good layer of seasoning seasoning, you do want to use plenty of fat. Yes, I said fat, right, butter, coconut oil, olive oil, whatever your favorite natural fat is, maybe even lard or bacon grease.
- Speaker 1: [03:33](#) No shame in that, but make sure you aren't skimping on it. So for example, even with my well-seasoned skillets, if I tried to cook scrambled eggs with no fat, we're going to have a problem. But if I just add a little bit of olive oil, which is our egg

oil of choice, there is no stickin whatsoever. Side benefit, your food is going to taste better with a little bit of fat in there and no, you don't need to fear the fat because there's been a lot of misinformation spread about that over the years. So that's beyond the scope of today's episode, but healthy, natural fats, butter, coconut oil, olive oil, lard, bacon, grease, et cetera. You don't have to be scared of them. Use them in moderation and definitely use them when you're cooking with cast iron. Okay? Myth number two. Oh, this is one of my favorites.

Speaker 1: [04:33](#)

You should never use metal utensils with your cast iron. So many years ago I recorded a YouTube video. This was like back before YouTube was even cool. It was a long time ago about how to cook eggs in a cast iron skillet without sticking. And I had several people in the comments chastise me because in the video I was using a metal spatula, so I believed them and forever I'm like, Oh my gosh, I'm such an idiot. I was using a metal spatula in the pan and I always would use wooden spoons. Umm...myth busted you guys. Here's the deal. When you have a well seasoned pan, the seasoning is not a simple coating of oil, right? It's not just a thin layer of oil, it's actually bonded to the pan. So as long as you're just using a metal utensil in a normal way to flip food or to stir food, it's not going to make the seasoning come off.

Speaker 1: [05:35](#)

And it shouldn't scratch the pan either. Now, if you ever do see little black flakes coming off your pan, more than likely it's actually just cooked on the food and not the seasoning itself. So don't be afraid to use metal utensils. You know, don't go in there and just beat the heck out of your pans with them. But in moderation, in normal use should not be a problem. All right? Myth number three is that you should never ever, ever cook acidic foods in cast iron. So to bust this myth, I did quite a bit of reading and also just contemplated my own experiences in cast iron. So here's what I ultimately came up with. You absolutely can cook acidic foods and cast iron with a few, uh, recommendations. So a well-seasoned pan is going to keep the food from coming in contact with the actual metal pan.

Speaker 1: [06:41](#)

So when it does come in contact with the metal, that's where we might get the issues of the metallic taste coming from the skillet or maybe the concern of leaching metals into the food. But as long as the pan has that layer of seasoning, it's not going to be an issue. Now, that being said, you still don't want to simmer an acidic food, let's say tomato sauce for example. You don't want to simmer it for very long periods of time in a cast iron pot. So if you're doing your canning project and you're going to simmer that sauce for three hours to get it to reduce,

probably not going to use cast iron for that. I would keep your cook time with acidic foods less than about 20 minutes in cast iron. Then you should be just fine, and I do this all the time.

Speaker 1: [07:30](#) I will make sauces or a pasta dish with tomato sauce in it. We'll use a cast iron skillet, but it's just not going to be cooking for very, very long. Just a little flash in the pan and we call it good. Also make sure you're not storing acidic foods in cast iron because you will have some leaching and some metallic taste going on. Now the exception to the rule here is enameled cast iron. So there's more and more of that sort of cookware popping up these days. And if it's the type of cast iron with the coating, that's totally fine and you can simmer for very long periods. My favorite cast iron Dutch ovens that I use are enamel coated and I have simmered tomato sauce in there for hours with zero issue. Okay. Myth number four is that if it's rusty, then it must be ruined.

Speaker 1: [08:29](#) So thankfully this is not true and it actually takes a whole lot to ruin cast iron. It can be done, but it takes more than you think. We have this homestead and heritage cooking group on Facebook. Um, it's been a great mastermind group. Lots of people, lots of cool ideas. But I remember, I think a couple months ago someone was telling story that they had found a cast iron skillet that was being used as a doorstop in like their grandpa's shop for decades. It was just sitting on the floor holding open the door and they took the skillet, they stripped it down, re seasoned it and started using it. It was just fine. I love that because you know, raise your hand if you've ever bought the cheap nonstick pans that you use for six months and then you literally throw them in the trash. You know, I did that back in the day.

Speaker 1: [09:29](#) So annoying. Cast iron, as long as you're just moderately mindful of taking care of it, it'll last for decades or beyond. Now you just want to make sure there are a few things that can be a deal breaker with cast iron. You want to make sure it's not rusted all the way through, right? I've never actually seen that happen. But let's say you have a skillet where there's daylight showing through a hole where it's rusted. Obviously that is not a candidate for salvaging, nor is a skillet that has cracked. And I've never had a skillet crack. But I know that if you take them from extreme temperatures, you know, you have a very hot skillet, you, uh, run it under ice water. It can potentially crack, so you don't want to try to save one of those either, but a little bit of rust is no big deal.

- Speaker 1: [10:21](#) You would just want to sand it down. Maybe use some steel wool re season it and you should be just fine. Okay, so I kind of have to brace myself for this last myth because I know I'm going to get some emails over this one. I'm just gearing myself up. Okay, here is the myth. Some of you are going to be scandalized by this. The myth is that you can never ever, ever use soap on your cast iron. I know. I just felt the collective cringe because I'm here to say that you can use a little bit of soap on the cast iron and the cast iron police will not show up at your door. I know it's scandalous. It's controversial, but I've just got to say it like it is guys. So let me explain. Okay. Like I mentioned before, the seasoning on a skillet is not a light oil coating.
- Speaker 1: [11:18](#) So if I was simply taking some olive oil, rubbing it on my skillet and calling that seasoning, then soap would absolutely remove that. But that's not seasoning. True seasoning is bonded onto the pot. So a little bit of soap is not going to remove the seasoning. You can use a little soap. It's not going to remove the season. I'm saying it again. Okay. Now I've also heard people say that soap will make your food tastes like soap. If you use soap on the pan, it's gonna make your food taste bad. I personally have never had that problem. Now, let me explain. So when I am going to use soap on my skillet, it's number one. Not every single time. It's only in cases where the food is really stuck on there or it's very, very greasy. So if I have some sort of strong tasting food with a lot of onions or garlic, and there's a considerable greasy residue on that pan, I use a teeny splash of soap, scrub it out quickly and call it good.
- Speaker 1: [12:23](#) I don't need to use soap every time. So, um, example, you know, if I have a little bit of meat, I'm sautéing and I have a little bit of oil in there and it's plenty lubricated. I will probably just let the pan cool, wipe it out and put it back on the wall where I store it. I'm not going to use soap for that. Um, but if it's really got some food residue like hardcore on there, I do break out the soap and just so you don't think I have completely gone, um, rebellious here. America's test kitchen, which I have a lot of respect for. They also back me up and say you can use a little soap. So I know some of the purists will disagree totally fine. You don't have to use soap, but if you'd get in a bind a little bit is probably not going to hurt anything.
- Speaker 1: [13:13](#) Now, a few things that you definitely shouldn't do. You don't want to use steel wool on your pan every time you clean it. That's only reserved for if you're stripping it down to bare metal and seasoning it all over again. You also definitely don't want to use scouring powders like comments or any of those really abrasive powders. Don't use those and definitely don't let your

pans soak in water. That's where you're going to get rust spots very, very quickly. So wash dry. Sometimes I like to put a fresh coating of oil after I dry it just to protect it. That's not seasoning it, it's just protecting it and then I put it into storage. So that's how I care for my skill. If there's lots of other ways to do it. But just want to say once and for all, I have used soap. My skillets are still very happy and thriving.

Speaker 1: [14:13](#)

So the wrap it up all in all cast iron is an amazing addition to your kitchen. It's affordable. It's tougher than nails, no matter what. The internet would leave you, lead you to believe and it will last a lifetime. So if you are falling in love with the idea of an old fashioned intentional kitchen full of nourishing food and memories, you will love my heritage kitchen handbook. I have packed this ebook full of my very best tricks for cooking and eating like a farmer. Even if you live in this city and you can grab it for free over at www.heritagekitchenhandbook.com. Okay, my friend, I have some good news for you. You are not a weirdo. It feels good to hear that. Right, but if you have had these strange urges to make yogurt or to culture buttermilk or to try your hand at some homemade mozzarella, well you're in good company.

Speaker 1: [15:17](#)

The tough part is that sometimes it's almost impossible to find home dairy supplies locally, which is why I have come to rely heavily on the new England cheese making supply company. They are my absolute lifeline for everything. I need to make all the dairy stuff in my kitchen from cultures to equipment to supplies they've got it and to make your life easier. I've put together a free quick start guide that includes not only my favorite home dairy recipes, a list of the cultures that I use the most, but we put a little discount code in there for you as well. Head over to theprairiehomestead.com/cheese to check it out, and that is it. Thanks for following along with the most annoying cast iron myths. If you have a minute, I would be honored if you would pop over to your favorite podcast player, hit subscribe and leave a quick review so more people can find this podcast and bring homesteading into their lives. I can't wait to catch up with you next time on the next episode of the old fashioned on purpose podcast.