

- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. So there is some serious cast iron fearmongering floating around out there and it drives me crazy. They say, don't use metal utensils. Don't use scrubbies. Don't let it touch water on and on and on. It feels so overwhelming and honestly it kept me from even wanting to use cast iron for years. But you know what? It's not true. Cast iron is totally not fussy. And in today's episode I'm going to walk you through my no fuss every day cast iron routine so you can feel confident to finally use those skillets you have lingering in the back of your cabinets. I'm your host Jill Winger and for the last 10 years I've been helping people just like you who feel disenchanting with modern life. I'll show you how to leave the rat race and create the life you really want by learning how to grow your own food and master old fashioned skills.
- Speaker 1: [01:14](#) I am officially a cast iron addict, like can you relate? Raise your hand. Seriously. I cannot get enough of it. I have this odd compulsion to buy more of it, even though I don't really need it. Like I have plenty. I guess I have plenty. What is plenty like what does that really mean when it comes to cast iron? Is there ever enough? Maybe not, but anyway, every time I go to a store or I see a skillet at a yard sale, I just want to buy it. Even if I have like four of the exact same size, it's literally an addiction. It's all over my kitchen. I decorate with it, I use it for everything I can think of, breakfast, lunch, dinner, desserts, everything. Um, and it's definitely something that I feel like really brings an amazing homestead vibe into your kitchen workspace. Now, unfortunately, like I mentioned in the intro, there's a lot of misinformation floating around about what exactly one should do or how you should handle cast iron.
- Speaker 1: [02:21](#) I feel like a lot of it honestly is just a bunch of old wives tales that have been perpetuated by, you know, great aunt Ethel for way too long. And we need to stop the misinformation cause it's driving me quite frankly, crazy. It doesn't have to be complicated and cast iron is not near as delicate as you have been led to believe. I really didn't want to use my skillets for years because of everything I read online. And here's, here's something I don't talk about very often. Sometimes you know what I hear online shakes my competence. And I remember a couple of years ago as well, it was more than a couple, it was a while ago I did a YouTube video. This was like way back before I started my channel. It was just a random YouTube video on how I cook scrambled eggs in a cast iron skillet without them sticking.
- Speaker 1: [03:13](#) And so I had the camera on my pan and I was using a metal spatula to move the eggs around. And I was heavily chastised in

the comments of that YouTube video. People yelling at me for using a metal spatula. And like after that it kinda like shook my confidence and I didn't use it, use the pan or you know, or the spatula with the pan for quite a long time. So like I said, a lot of misinformation. I'm here to break down the lies today so you can feel really confident in using the skillets or pans or whatever else you have that's cast iron in your kitchen, get it out, use it and you will love it. So this episode is about my everyday care routine. We'll have another episode on seasoning or reseasoning, but this one is just how I use it on a regular basis.

Speaker 1: [04:07](#) So I wanted to just walk you through an example of how I would handle this skillet. Let's say we're talking about a skillet. I'm going to use scrambled eggs as my example food because we make scrambled eggs in our cast iron skillets every single morning. And I really do feel like eggs are a problem area for a lot of folks. They get stuck on the pan. And I think it's a lot of times why people continue to use Teflon or other nonstick coated cookware. You know, eggs, eggs are kind of the troublemaker. So first off, before we get into the cast iron care, I can just want to reassure you that you can make amazing eggs that do not stick in cast iron. The key is used plenty of fat, right? A butter, lard, coconut oil, olive oil, and let's be honest, that makes it tastes better anyway, right?

Speaker 1: [05:03](#) Like come on, got to have a fat and also let the pan get hot first. The biggest recipe for disaster is skipping on the fat and putting your eggs in a cold pan and then letting it heat up as they cook. Like it will be a glued-on mess. So fat and hot pan, you should be fine. So I've made my eggs, we eat the eggs and I have the pan sitting on the stove top waiting for me. So here's what I do with it. The first thing I do is make sure that I let the cast iron piece cooled down sufficiently. Not only is it usually too hot to actually grab, but if you plunge a hot skillet or pot into cold water in your sink, it's not good for it. So we want to let the skillet come to room temperature or maybe even a little bit warmer than that, but definitely it should not be hot when you go to clean it.

Speaker 1: [06:05](#) I usually leave it there until I'm done with the rest of the kitchen cleanup. I get all the other dishes out of the sink. I wipe the counters down, I put the food away, and then I turned my attention to the cast iron skillets. Now, once I do take it to the sink, the biggest thing to remember, and this is really the only big don't I'm going to emphasize in this episode, is you do not want to let your skillets soak in water. That's the biggest, no, no, because when they soak, they rust and it doesn't take a lot of soaking to create those rust spots. That's not to say however,

that you still can't use water to clean it. You just don't want it to soak in a sink full of soapy water. So what I will do is if there is food on there that just won't allow itself to be wiped out easily with a cloth or a paper towel, I'll take it into the sink and wash it quickly.

Speaker 1: [07:05](#) It goes in and it comes out. If there is a bit of food on there that is very much glued on, I might let the water sit in the bottom of that pan for a minute. Like I'm talking 60 seconds, maybe two minutes while I'm in the kitchen doing something else and then I'm going to get to scrubbing it. It's not going to sit in there for hours. What I do with what I use to clean my cast iron is just a scrubby sponge. Like I don't know the official name for it. I call it a scrubby sponge. It's the kind of has the um, like the SOS pad. Maybe that's not the right term. SOS. I don't, it's like the gritty Pad on one side and the sponge on the other. They're in every grocery store. Like I don't know what they're called, but I'm sure you've seen one before.

Speaker 1: [07:49](#) So I usually will use my little sponge to work on the pan. If I need the scouring side, I use that. Otherwise the sponge side is sometimes sufficient to get any food off. Now, if something is on there and I absolutely cannot get it off with just the sponge, my secret weapon is actually salt. So I have a box of cheap kosher salt. It's the coarse kind and I will sprinkle, I don't know, a tablespoon or two of salt in the pan and then use my scrubby and the salt will scour it off and it will not hurt the coating of the pan. So that's my little trick. It's way better than in that you don't want to use steel wool or anything like that on your pans. But salt is pretty darn magical if I do say so myself. So sponge salt, if needed, if the pan has just had a bit of light food in it or maybe you have, um, cooked, like let's say you have sauteed onions in the pan and it had a lot of oil, a lot of grease and nothing is glued onto the pan.

Speaker 1: [09:04](#) You can sometimes just take a paper towel and wipe it out. Keep in mind that with cast iron it's okay to have a little bit of an oily residue left over. Now we obviously don't want that, want that with other pans cause that's kinda gross where you know we want them to be clean. But with cast iron oil is good, fat is good and it a little bit of leftover is just fine. So there are plenty of times if what I have cooked in the pan is not overly strong flavored and it's not stuck on there, I wipe it with a paper towel and call it good.

Speaker 1: [09:39](#) So that leads me to one of my biggest pet peeves. And that is that a lot of folks misunderstand what seasoning is. So when we say a pan is seasoned, that means that the oil or grease that we

have used on that pan is bonded to the metal. And I think this misunderstanding happens because a lot of folks assume that seasoning is simply just a layer of oil that's sitting on the top bit of the metal of the pan. And that's not true. It's actually, if it has been seasoned properly or it has been seasoned from repeated use, that coating is bonded on there and it's going to be pretty difficult to get it off. Like a metal spatula is not going to hurt the seasoning. A little bit of the scrubby action won't hurt it. Um, even a little bit of, I feel like the whole internet is going to yell at me for this.

Speaker 1: [10:36](#) A little bit of soap will not take the seasoning off. I can feel the Pitchfork mob coming after me right now as I say that a little bit of soap won't remove your seasoning. I'm not saying you should use soap on your cast iron liberally or you should do that every day. But if you have cooked something in your skillet that is super strong flavored or super smelly and you don't want that residue in your skillet, I would use a smidgen of soap. Get it in, get it out, wipe it off, call it good. Don't tell anybody, but it's not going to take the seasoning off. Right. And I have other cast iron enthusiasts to back me up on that. I'm super scandalous. I know, but it's true.

Speaker 1: [11:16](#) So once I have my skillet cleaned, whether I've used salt or a scrubby or even just hot water and just rinsed out the residue, then I'm going to dry it. I just use a dish cloth and I'm going to dry it thoroughly. So with everything else I wash, I have a towel or a drying rack and I let it drip dry. Don't let your cast iron drip dry if you can help it because again that water will rest on the pan and potentially create rust spots. So get it dry. And then what I'd like to do just to give the skillet a little bit of extra TLC is that I a paper towel or you could use a reusable kitchen rag if you don't use paper towels and get some sort of cooking oil. I prefer coconut oil. For this, I used a refined expeller pressed coconut oil that does not smell or taste like coconut, so it's pretty much flavorless.

Speaker 1: [12:13](#) And I described a very, very small amount of that coconut oil on my rag or my paper towel. And I'm going to just wipe the skillet down inside and outside with the oil. And that's just going to keep it very, very happy and shiny and protected until I decided to use it again. And my only trick with that is if you are oiling it before you put it away, just make sure you wipe it off thoroughly. Otherwise you'll end up with an oily mess in your drawer. Or if you hang up your skill, it's on the wall. You'll get drips dripping down your wall and it'll look icky. So just, you don't need to have a glob of oil on there. Just a very, very thin

layer just to protect it until you use it again. And that is literally it. It's a simple wash, a simple wipe down, a dry oil and back.

Speaker 1: [13:05](#)

It goes to its home until it's needed. It does not have to be complicated. I don't have to do crazy things every time I use it. It's a very simple routine and it's very satisfying. You know, cast iron cooks well, it holds heat well. I love the crispiness. It puts on breads or meats that I sear in the skillet. So, um, it's just a fun piece of cookware to use and if you've been too scared to use it thus far, I am so excited for you to jump in there and pull it out of the cupboard and make your first batch of scrambled eggs with that skillet. So all in all cast iron is a very durable, very affordable cookware that you can literally hand down to your grandchildren. Like I have my grandma's skillet, I use it every day. It's still in use. And remember if the pioneers could cook with cast iron out on the Prairie, it's definitely not something we have to treat with kid gloves. So happy cast iron cooking.

Speaker 1: [14:13](#)

So if you are falling in love with the idea of an old fashioned intentional kitchen full of nourishing food and cast iron cookware and rich memories, you will love my heritage kitchen handbook. It's a simple, easy guide that I have packed full of my very best tricks for cooking and eating like a farmer. Even if you live in the city, you can grab it for free over [www.heritagekitchenhandbook.com](http://www.heritagekitchenhandbook.com) that's heritage kitchen handbook.com and that is it. If you enjoyed today's episode, I would be so appreciative if you would pop over, hit subscribe, and leave a quick review on your favorite podcast player so more people can find us and bring homesteading into their lives. Thanks so much for listening and I'll catch you next time on the old fashioned on purpose podcast.