

- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. I recently put out a poll on social media and said, what do you want to hear about in an upcoming episode of the podcast? And one of the things that came up over and over again was cast iron. What do I do with it? What do I buy? How do I take care of it? So I heard you and we are going to dive into everything you need to know to get your first cast iron pan or to use that pan has been sitting in the cabinet for a little bit too long. So it's going to be good. Here we go. I'm your host Jill winger. And over the last 10 years I've been helping people just like you who feel disenchanted by conventional 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 fashion skills no matter where you live.
- Speaker 1: [01:03](#) Okay, so cast iron is a big topic. So a little bit of back ground for some cast-iron myths that are very, very pervasive, and also my no-fuss cast iron care routine, check out episodes 50 and 55 cause it has all that information over there. In today's episode though, this is geared for the newbie cast iron user. So we're going to talk about brands. We're going to talk about what the heck to do with a pre-seasoned pan. We're going to talk about if enamel coated cast iron is a good option, which size to get all of those things. So it should be good and these are some really, really common questions that I have received. So hopefully this is helpful to you. All right, let's dive in. First off, the question of enamel coated cast iron versus non coated cast iron. Well I have both and I can attest that I love both of them really equally.
- Speaker 1: [02:13](#) I have mostly raw or I don't know what else to call it, naked cast iron, just your typical black cast iron. Most of my skilletts are that and I have most of my Dutch ovens are coated and honestly, I don't have a huge preference either way. I like the look of the enamel coated, especially for the Dutch ovens. They look, they just look cool. I like the colors. I like how they look when they're sitting on the stove. It's fun to have the color options. But you really aren't going to go wrong with either option. So a few things to know about enamel coated though, cause this is a question coming up a lot. Number one, you do not have to season enamel coated cast iron cookware so you don't have to worry about it. It's fine. It's usually fairly nonstick as is.
- Speaker 1: [03:07](#) Just use fat when you fry the eggs or when you saute the onions and you will be fine. Never had an issue. It's also a little bit better potentially for cooking with acidic ingredients, namely tomatoes. So sometimes if I still cooked tomato dishes in my naked cast iron, I know that's not the term and somebody's

gonna like send me an email. But anyway, that's what I'm calling it cause I don't know what else to call it. I'm having a brain moment anyway. If you cook tomatoes in a uncoated cast iron skillet and you let them simmer in there a very, very long time, sometimes the acid can react with the cast iron a little bit and give you some metallic tastes. That's not an issue when we have enamel coated pans. So if you're going to be simmering a batch of tomato sauce for a very long time, enamel is fantastic.

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Now one note that I have read a little bit about the enamel cast iron. I haven't really noticed this, but just I want you to be, you know, buyer beware is they say it can have slightly less conductivity so it may take a little bit longer to heat up. Again, I use my coated pans and pots a lot. It's not something that has been ever an issue or I've been like, Oh man, this pan takes so long to get warm. I've never thought that. So I wouldn't really worry about that too much. And lastly, they're just prettier. I think they're just great for that cottage country, farmhouse, kitchen look. Okay. So, in the world of non coated aka naked cast iron, oftentimes with the modern skillets or Dutch ovens, they will be sold as pre-seasoned. Now if you're familiar with lodge, which I'm assuming you probably are, lodge is one of the most popular manufacturers of cast iron cookware in the United States.

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I think pretty much all of their options are pre-seasoned. Sometimes it's causes some confusion. People don't know what to do with that. Is it really truly preseason? What do I have to do before I cook with it? And honestly, nothing. It works pretty darn good right out of the box. Now I know there are some cast iron purest who would say, Oh, I still redo it or I will still strip it down and season it myself. But if you're listening to this episode, it's probably because you're new to cast iron and I don't recommend like taking a power grinder to your brand new cast iron pan at this point in your life. It's like probably not a good idea. So just go with a pre-seasoned option. That's what I do. That's what most people do. It works fine. It will get better with age, but it works pretty great right out of the box as is.

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So just makes your life a little bit easier. And when it comes to the best brands of cast iron cookware, I mentioned lodge, it's a stand by. So if you're looking for a brand new pan or skillet or griddle, you know, right now lodge is an option that's American made and it's really inexpensive. It's very affordable. So you really can't go wrong with it and it works just fine. It's going to last, you know, and be a family heirloom that you can give to your grandkids. So there's nothing wrong with it. There are more designer brands of cast iron cookware. La Creuset is one

that I drool over every single time that I am in a, in a core store. Staub is another one. They're beautiful, they're durable. I'll be honest, I'm not afraid to invest in kitchen stuff that's, that's durable and will last for a long time, but I still have not bitten the bullets and got a La Creuset Dutch oven because they're upwards of \$300.

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And I just like, I'll pick it up and I'll be like, Oh, I just can't, they put it back down. And honestly I have my Dutch ovens are, I think by I got them at TJ max on clearance. Maybe they're cuisinart and there's what the other brands, I think it's a crockpot brand anyway, they're coated cast iron. I don't really know how La Creuset would be better than what I have cause they work beautifully and they were 30 to 40 bucks. So I am a stickler for good quality kitchenware, but I also don't like spending more than I need to. So if you like something I'll get a La Creuset. I know I will. But I just don't have one now and I really wouldn't worry about investing in that unless you really, really want to just find a nice enamel coated one or a good lodge and you should be just fine.

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Now older cast iron is fantastic a lot of the time, especially if you can find the Griswold brand or the Wagner brand, those are kind of the gold standard of older cast iron. And if you have those, they should be marked on the bottom, like keep those, do not get rid of them. They are amazing. And even if it's old and crusty, you can strip it down, re season it and just keep on trucking with using it. So those are fantastic. I have found a few cast iron pieces at Goodwill or at garage sales and there'll be like marked on the bottom as made in China or made in Taiwan. And like I have one skillet, the smaller one and it says made in Taiwan on the bottom. It just doesn't feel as good. It's lighter. Um, it works. Like there's nothing wrong with it, but it's not my favorite.

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So if you find something like that in a garage sale for a buck, absolutely grab it. But, just preference wise, I like lodge or I like the Wagners or the Griswolds or you know, something that's a little more high quality, a better brand. So that's just kind of my cast iron snob talking. But anyway, it's hard to go really, really wrong with cast iron cause it's cast iron is cast iron. Like as long as you take care of it and it's not craft or you know, something is horribly wrong with it, you should be fine as far as size goes, I will tell you that I use my 10 inch skillets there, then they're not an coated coat at their regular old ten inch. I use them more than anything else. Um, I have three or four of them. There are times when I'm making dessert in them or I'm sauteed onions in

them or baking bread and I'm using three or four for a meal or during a days timeframe.

Speaker 1: [10:03](#) So I definitely would start with a 10 inch skillet. You can do so, so much with it. The next one that I use the most would be my five quart Dutch ovens. I have three of those. I think one of them is a six quart. But anyway, I have two fives and one six. They have a lid. They need to have a lid. That's important. They will, most all of them will come with the lids. You don't have to worry about that. But I use those for all of my soups, all of my stews, roasts, chicken. I mean, they're constantly being used. And so those I cannot live without. You can go bigger. Um, I do, I think have a, maybe a seven quart lodge that's sharp and it's heavy and it's cumbersome. And honestly, there's not a whole lot of times, even with three kids that I have a meal that warrants that big of a Dutch oven.

Speaker 1: [10:59](#) So most of my breads and everything will fit in the five quart. It's not as heavy. They're definitely heavier than, you know, your cheesy, Teflon coated, lightweight pans. I'm trying to think of a nice word to say that was as nice as I could go. I don't like those ones. They're not my favorite, but anyway, they're heavier, but I don't think it's ridiculous. But I keep my piece is pretty simple. I did just like yesterday, I got a mini cake pan. It's made by lodge. It has seven little shallow cake slots in a single pan. I had a gift card and I thought it would be fun. That's about is uh, what's the word? Not gimmicky. That's the wrong word. Um, specialized. That's the word that's a specialized, I get like, I just want my pans and my cookware to be really versatile.

Speaker 1: [11:57](#) I don't want it to be like one hit wonders where they can do one thing. So with the mini cake pan for example, it can do little corn breads, it can do little hand pies, it can do little fruit pies or cakes were upside down pineapple cake stuff. So there's lots of ideas I have for it, which is why I get it. Otherwise I would not have, cause I don't want anything. Like I said, it just has one use and that's it because my kitchen just isn't big enough for that. So anyway, if you have that cast iron pan or Dutch oven in the cabinet and you've been scared, just use it like a, you're not going to mess it up. If you have a little sticking the first few times it's okay. Use a little more fat or butter or bacon grease next time it will work out and it's just a learning process.

Speaker 1: [12:41](#) But I think that you'll find once you get the hang of your cast iron, it will quickly become your most loved cooking utensil in the kitchen. And not to mention you can pass it on to your kids or your grandkids and they kind of become like an old friend in the kitchen. So I highly recommend it. Either invest in one and

get a \$20 10 inch skillet from wattage or a Dutch oven and just start experimenting. So if you're falling in love with the idea of an old fashioned intentional kitchen full of nourishing food and rich memories, you're going to love my heritage kitchen handbook. I've packed it 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 heritagekitchenhandbook.com and that's it for today, my friend. Thanks for listening. If you have a minute, I would be so honored if you would hit subscribe and leave a quick review over on your favorite podcast player so more people can find this podcast and bring homesteading into their lives. Thanks for listening and we'll catch up next time on the old fashioned on purpose podcast.