



If you love a good campfire cooked meal, a camp oven of your own will open up a whole new world of recipes to test at the campsite.

Given there are two distinct types of camp ovens on the market, we get lots of questions regarding which one is best: cast iron or steel. So, if you're currently tossing up between the two, we've put together a list and a video of everything that you need to consider when choosing a camp oven. We cover which is the easiest to transport, as well as what material is stronger, easier to care for, and cook with – plus more, so read on for all the details!

For a visual rundown on the differences between cast iron and spun steel, watch the video above.

1. Transporting Your Camp Oven

While the size of the two camp ovens is fairly similar, there is a huge weight difference between them!

Cast iron camp ovens are quite heavy. This is a big consideration for long trips when you are packed to the hilt and fitting everything within your Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM).

In most cases, steel camp ovens are as little as half the weight of their cast iron equivalents.

2. Which is Stronger, Cast Iron or Steel?

Camp ovens usually take a beating. They are subject to incredibly high temperatures, and picked up by shovels, multi-grips, and wire hooks. They usually get dropped every now and then, and tend to get knocked about at the campsite.

Cast iron is very robust but cracks easily if dropped on a hard surface. On the other hand, steel camp ovens were invented to overcome the issue of being dropped out of stockman's saddlebags; the worst you can expect is a dent or two, should it take a fall.



A cast iron camp versus a spun steel camp oven.

3. Caring for Your Camp Oven

It doesn't matter which oven you choose, they both need to be cared for in the same way. Initially, new camp ovens need to be seasoned – check out our full guide on seasoning cast iron here.

All camp ovens also need to be stored clean, dry, and oiled. After your oven is washed and dried, you will need to use a paper towel to spread a thin layer of oil around the inside of the to prevent it from rusting.

Some people will tell you to never wash your oven with soapy water, but it really doesn't matter – as long as you oil it afterwards.

For more on caring for your camp oven, check out this chat with Kingbrown and Mick Viller on the Snowys Camping Show:



4. Cooking with Your Camp Oven

For many people, this is the deciding factor when choosing between cast iron and steel. Cast iron heats up slower but holds heat for longer, making it easy to achieve well-cooked, flavoursome meals. Roasts, casseroles, stews, and curries all taste so much better when they are slow-cooked, and the cast iron oven does this the best!

Steel transfers heat far quicker, making meals a little trickier to perfect – so you may initially create a few less-than-perfect meals.

Check out [Cam's festive camp oven meal](#) below:



A cast iron oven will hold heat longer in comparison to a spun steel oven.

5. Additional Features

One great advantage of most steel ovens is that you can use the lid as a frying pan! The [Bedourie](#) oven has a large flat lid that, when flipped over, is the perfect size for a large frying pan that can be used directly over the fire.

It can be a real advantage having one oven that has it all, rather than having to carry multiple items to the campsite.

6. Cooking with Gas

As steel ovens transfer heat much faster, they're easier to use when cooking with gas. They are basically a large pot or frying pan that will still work with your gas stove.

Cast iron will take longer to heat up on a gas stove, but again, will retain heat for longer – so once hot, you can turn off the gas and let it slow cook for longer.

Ben and Lauren discuss cast iron Vs spun steel camp ovens on the [Snowys Camping Show](#) too:

Whichever you choose, you can make gourmet meals from any camp oven with just a little practice. [Cooking on a fire](#) is very different from the control of your kitchen – but once you get the hang of it, you'll fall in love with campfire cooking very quickly!

Have you mastered some camp oven meals? Share them with us in the comments.