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Whether you're new to campfire cooking or just looking to change it up this season...

We tell you everything you need to know about cast iron and spun steel camp ovens in this episode of the Snowys Camping Show.

On this week's show, your favourite camping experts Ben and Lauren get into the nitty-gritty of camp ovens. They compare the different types and talk through their versatility. There's also a discussion around strength, weight and storage, plus cleaning, seasoning and the time needed for pre-heating. We want to make choosing a camp oven for your campfire cooking a no-brainer, so check it out for more!

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Mentioned in this Episode:

Snowys Content:

[Seasoning Your Camp Oven | YouTube](#)

Products:

[Southern Metal Spinners Australian-made spun steel camp ovens](#)

[Dr. Livingstone's Australian-made bedourie oven](#)

[Cast iron camp ovens](#)

[Campfire cooking equipment](#)

Other:

[Mick Viller - Camp Oven Cook | Website](#)

[Lock Your Hubs 4WDing: Cast Iron vs Bedourie Camp Ovens | YouTube](#)



Strength

Spun steel is extremely durable, so even if it does fall off the back of your ute and cop a dent, you'll be able to beat it back into shape and use it again.

Cast iron is very robust and will last a lifetime or more if taken care of properly. However, it can crack if dropped onto a hard surface which pretty much renders it unusable.

Weight

Spun steel is a third of the weight of cast iron, making it less of an effort to transport and carry. If you prefer a minimal set up, or if you're already pushing your weight limit, keep this in mind.

Storage

No matter what camp oven you have, you'll need to store it away cool and dry. Right before you put it back into its carry bag, apply a thin layer of oil to stop any rust from forming while it's not in use.

Steps to Take Before Using Your Camp Oven

When you get your cast iron or spun steel straight out of the box, you will need to clean it first. Some camp ovens will come with a coating of food-grade wax or oil to stop it from rusting, which will need to be lightly scrubbed off before you begin the seasoning process. Even if it does come pre-seasoned it's still good practice to season it yourself before using it. Once your oven is clean and dry, buff a layer of vegetable oil (or any oil with a high smoke point) into the surface, put it in your oven or hooded barbeque at a high temperature for 30 mins to an hour, and then take it out. Then repeat the process a few times until the surface is nice and shiny, and it will be ready to use.

Seasoning

Keep in mind that with spun steel, it may take longer for you to build up the perfect seasoned coating in comparison to cast iron.



Both styles of camp ovens have their pros and cons. Image: iStock

Detergent on Cast Iron?

There's a bit of a myth going around that soap or detergent will damage the seasoning of your cast iron, but that's actually not the case. When coated and seasoned, the oil creates a bond with the surface so a small amount of detergent or soapy water can be used to clean it, so long as you don't submerge it or scrub it vigorously.

Removing Rust

Rust isn't the end of the road when it comes to your steel or cast iron gear, it can be restored, and then re-seasoned many times over. You can do this by soaking the pan in vinegar and water for a few hours, and then scrubbing it with mild detergent to get the rust off. After that, just re-season and it will be ready to use again.

Heating Times

Cast iron will take a while to heat up and also to cool down. This does make for a longer wait before you can get dinner on, but similar to your oven at home, it creates a better temperature or environment for making cakes, roasts, casseroles, stews and more. Spun steel will heat up much faster and subsequently it will cool down more quickly, so you will have to alter your cooking method, and make use a trivet so that your dish doesn't heat



up too quickly.

Versatility

Spun steel gives you the option to use your oven or bedourie lid as a frypan making it a multipurpose piece of convenient cooking gear. It can also be used on top of a gas stove, which won't work with cast iron due to the weight and how much gas and time it will take to heat the cast iron.

Spun steel is a better choice for weight conscious campers who often travel off-road, along rough tracks. It also caters for multi-purpose gear and provides the option to use a gas stove. But for those slow cooked delicious meals and perfectly recreating your favourite recipes over the campfire, you can't beat cast iron!

Australian-Made Camp Ovens

If Australian made is an important factor for you, in the spun steel category you have a few readily available options such as Hillbilly, Dr.Livingstone's and Southern Metal Spinners. But, in terms of commercially available Australian cast iron camp ovens, there aren't any foundries that produce mass quantities. Inquiries can be made, but just bear in mind that there may be high demand and changing health and safety conditions that affect availability.

Thanks for listening, tune in again for next week's episode!

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If you have any questions for Ben and Lauren, make sure you head over to our [Facebook group](#) and let us know as we'd love to hear from you.

Catch you out there!