



A campfire can offer so much... whether it be warmth for comfort, heat for cooking, lighting for ambience or just a visual distraction for when the conversation gets boring.

By harnessing the heat that a fire produces, there are numerous pieces of cooking equipment that you can use to cook on the campfire. We'll be looking at five options, including cook stands, camp ovens, jaffle irons, forks and hot plates.

Before we get cooking though, we need to ensure we're equipped and ready. No matter how you're cooking on the campfire, preparation is key.



A roaring campfire - is there anything better on a chilly evening? Image: Coleman

Take these steps before cooking on a campfire:

1. Clear the area around the fire

Ensure the space around your campfire is open and clear, allowing you to move with ease and providing space for any cooking equipment when not in use. It also reduces the risk of embers catching alight any nearby fuel.



Clear the area around where you're going to light your fire. Image: Coleman

2. Have a means of extinguishing the fire

Never take chances or get complacent with campfires - no matter how experienced you are. Whenever a fire is alight, there are always risks so ensure you have a plan and a way to extinguish the flames if needed.

3. Wear heat proof gloves & closed shoes

These protective gloves, which are made of leather are fantastic when handling hot equipment or when managing equipment in and around campfires. It's also best to wear closed shoes when you are preparing food around a fire to protect your feet.



Protecting yourself is essential. Image: Coleman

4. Have some cooking oil and paper towel ready

You'll need to use the cooking oil and paper towel to season or cure your campfire cooking equipment which helps to prevent food sticking while it cooks and makes the clean up much easier.

5. Keep a shovel nearby

The shovel doesn't need to be big, just big enough to help you manage the fire when it comes to shifting firewood or shovelling coals.





A shovel will help you manage the fire properly. Image: Coleman

With our preparation sorted, let's take a look at some cooking options:

Cook stands

Cook stands are usually designed around a stake that is hammered into the ground or supported via a base located on the edge of the fire. While designs vary, the concept remains the same with the stand allowing you to add your choice of pan, pot, hooks or grill.

These can then be height adjusted depending on the fire's heat and can be swung around allowing you to manage your meal away from the flames.

Cooking with a cook stand

Once you have your fire burning and generating enough heat for your cooking needs, simply attach your pan, pot or grill to your stand and position it over the flames or coals. Be aware that the greater the fire doesn't necessarily mean the better for cooking as heat may become inconsistent or you could get ash and soot blowing into your food.

Pros and cons of cook stands

Cook stand combinations are often made from steel and are very robust. They transfer heat quickly and so long as you prepare your cooking surface well, they are relatively easy to clean.

However, they can also be quite heavy and bulky to transport, rust easily if not maintained, and they won't work if you can't stabilise the stake in the ground.



Frying up some sausages for dinner on a cook stand over a campfire. Image: Hillbilly Camping Gear

Camp ovens

Camp ovens are very well known in the camping market, and the enjoyment they bring campers never grows old. The idea of a camp oven is to give you portable baking facilities while camping.

Made from either cast iron or steel, they are shaped like a pot with a lid and come in a range of sizes depending on your needs. Trivets or racks can also be added to assist with certain styles of cooking.

Cooking in a camp oven

To get cooking with a camp oven, having a good amount of hot coals is critical. Importantly, you want to avoid putting a camp oven onto direct flames. The heat cannot be controlled thus giving inconsistent temperatures and uneven cooking as a result.



Pros and cons of a camp oven

The value of having a cast iron camp oven is that it heats up more slowly and holds heat for longer making them ideal for baking, stewing and roasting. Steel alternatives are half the weight of their cast iron counterparts, making them much lighter to carry but they also transfer heat far more quickly which can be tricky to manage.

Many people regard steel as being much more robust than cast iron as despite it's weight and appearance, cast iron can actually chip or crack.



The humble, yet versatile camping oven is a must-have for those who love a good stew or roast. Image: Coleman

Jaffle iron

Similar to camp ovens in that they are made from cast iron, jaffle irons are basically two concave plates that are hinged and connected to a metal rod. This allows you to create simple but easy campfire meals.

Cooking with a jaffle iron

Typically, bread is used to line the plates of the jaffle iron. Then the choice of what's cooked inside is up to you and your imagination!

Once loaded with food, you close the plates shut, lock them off and then use the metal rod to dangle the jaffle iron over the fire. Like with camp ovens, having hot coals provides more consistent heat.

Pros and cons of jaffle irons

A little experimentation and some trial and error may be needed while you get use to cooking with a jaffle iron. It's not as precise and it's important to rotate every now and again to ensure both sides cook evenly.

Jaffle irons can be quite limiting due to their size and unique design, however, what you can achieve with them is very much up to you.

They present a great opportunity to get creative with different ingredients and are a bit of fun for both kids and adults alike.



A jaffle iron makes cooking dinner easy when you've had a long day around camp.

Forks

Campfire forks are just large forks made of chrome steel which allows you to penetrate through food which is then suspended over the fire for cooking.



Cooking with a campfire fork

This form of cooking is mostly limited to toasting marshmallows but like the jaffle iron, there's opportunity to get creative and many people have used a fork to cook their snag over hot coals.

Pros and cons of campfire forks

Forks come in all shapes, sizes and designs and you can choose from single pronged, double or even triple. A great portable option is from [Campfire](#) with their fork allowing you to extend the rod, doubling its length to make cooking easier yet retracting it to a convenient and manageable size for packing away.

It's important to note that when using a fork, your food is likely to be exposed so unless you want a charred and blackened marshy, it's best to avoid the flames and hover your fork above the coals instead.



Campfire forks are a simple and easy option. Image: Coleman

Hot plates

Last, but not least is the trusty hot plate. This device is typically fixed with legs and placed over the fire or on the edge with a scraping of coals beneath. It's a very basic yet classic style of cooking. One that's been a staple in many people's outdoor culinary kit for years.

Cooking with hot plates

Similar to using cook stands, hot plates can be used over either direct flame or coals. Most people tend to choose coals to avoid getting too close to open flames - which can be quite a heated challenge!

Hot plates can either be purchased as pre-made units or created from scrap metal. You can argue either way for both options. But, it really comes down to what is available, best value, and easiest for you.

Pros and cons of hot plates

These are available in a range of sizes and come as a solid plate, grill plate or a combination of the two. Just remember, it's really hard to cook eggs on a grill, so choose your plate wisely!



The trusty hotplate is a classic and simple way to cook over a fire. Image: Coleman

Now it's time to start cooking!

So, there you have it, these are five easy cooking options for making a delicious meal over a campfire on your future adventures. Time to get cookin'!



How do you cook on your campfire? Do you do anything different? We'd love to hear about it.

