



STRATA<sup>®</sup>

# Carbon Steel Reference Guide

Cooking with Strata  
Carbon Clad Pans

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# About Our Carbon Clad Pans

Unlike single layered traditional carbon steel pans, the Strata Carbon Clad Pan features a multi-layered construction. It includes a top carbon steel cooking surface, a light and responsive aluminum core, and a rust resistant stainless steel base. Our carbon clad pans are designed to give you the seasonable cooking surface of traditional carbon steel with enhanced heat distribution, at a fraction of the weight.

## Care

- ✓ Season before first cook
- ✓ Hand wash only
- ✓ Oil inside surface after washing
- ✓ Store in dry place
- ✗ Do not wash in dishwasher
- ✗ Do not soak or leave wet

## Use

- ✓ Suitable for all stovetops, including induction
- ✓ Oven safe
- ✓ Metal utensil safe (scratches are OK!)
- ✗ Do not heat over 600 ° F
- ✗ Avoid high heat on an empty pan
- ✗ Avoid rapid temperature changes



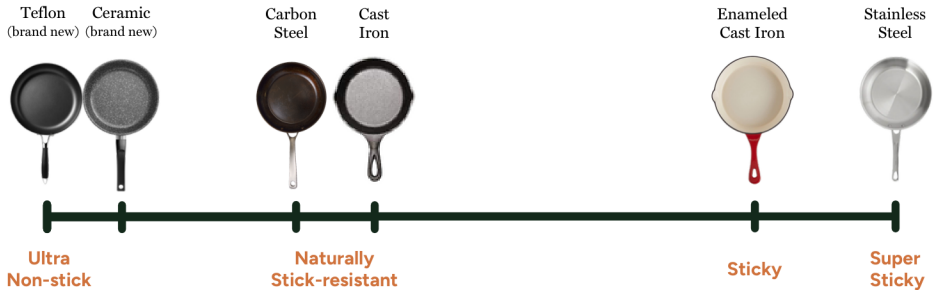
# New to Carbon Steel?

## What is Carbon Steel?

Carbon steel cookware is favored for its versatility, durability, and natural stick-resistant properties. Similar to cast iron, carbon steel pans need to be “seasoned.” This creates unique benefits and differences in the way you might cook, clean, and care for your pan compared to other cookware.

## How Non-stick is Carbon Steel?

With a small amount of oil or fat, carbon steel can be impressively non-stick without any artificial coatings.



# Seasoning

## What is Seasoning?

When we say seasoning, we aren't talking about salt and pepper. Seasoning is the layer that forms when oils and fats are heated in a pan, causing them to polymerize and form a natural, hardened surface. Both the layer itself, and the process of forming the layer are referred to as "seasoning."

The seasoning layer creates a naturally stick-resistant surface that improves with use, becoming more effective over time. It's also resilient and easily repaired through cooking.

## Oils and Fats

**You can use ANY oil/fat while you cook.** Butter is often preferred for taste. However, when it comes to building the best seasoning, you'll want something with a **high smoke point and a neutral taste**. Here are some of our oil recommendations for building a strong seasoning...

## Best for Seasoning

Do Use:	Avoid
✓ Grapeseed Oil	✗ Olive Oil
✓ Vegetable Oil	✗ Flaxseed Oil
✓ Canola Oil	✗ Coconut Oil
✓ Sunflower Oil	

## Initial Seasoning Methods

Before you start cooking for the first time, we recommend doing an initial seasoning. This reduces sticking and protects the carbon steel surface from rust. It's the best way to get your seasoning started.

### Oven Method (Recommended)

1. **Preheat oven** to 425 °F.
2. **Clean the pan** thoroughly with soap and hot water to remove the protective coating.
3. **Dry the pan** by heating it up briefly on a burner for about 30 seconds after drying with a towel.
4. Add approx. ¼ tsp of **high smoke point oil** to the cooking surface and coat the inside of the pan by wiping with a clean towel. Don't coat the stainless steel underside and handle.
5. Take a clean towel and **wipe down the surface again** until it looks almost dry.
6. Place the pan upside down **in the oven**.
7. After about **2-3 minutes** remove the pan and give it a quick wipe to prevent oil beading, then return it to the oven.
8. **After an hour**, turn off the oven and let the pan cool down in oven.
9. In the end, the pan should have a bronze patina. It may turn blueish if it's a little too hot or in for too long. This is ok.
10. For best results, repeat for a second coat, or start cooking!

### Stove Top Method (Faster Option)

1. **Clean the pan** thoroughly with soap and hot water to remove the protective coating.
2. **Dry the pan** by heating it up briefly on a burner for about 30 seconds after drying with a towel.
3. Add approx. ¼ tsp of **high smoke point oil** to the cooking surface and coat the inside of the pan by wiping with a clean towel. Don't coat the stainless steel underside and handle.
4. Take a clean towel and **wipe down the surface again** until it looks almost dry.
5. Return the **pan to the burner** and turn up to medium-high heat.
6. After about **1-2 minutes**, **wipe** the pan one more time with a clean towel to prevent beading.
7. Leave the pan on for about **8-10 min on the stove top**. Your pan may lightly smoke, if it's smoking heavily, turn down the temperature a little.
8. In the end, the pan should have a bronze patina. It may turn blueish if it's a little too hot or on for too long. This is ok.
9. For best results, repeat for a second coat, or start cooking!

## Seasoning Over Time

After the “initial seasoning” the pan will continue to **build seasoning layers as you cook**. The performance can feel unpredictable early on, and it's common to lose seasoning, resulting in 'bald spots.' Don't worry—this is all part of the process. The best way to build a good seasoning is to **just keep cooking**.



## Maintenance Seasoning

It can be helpful to add a seasoning layer after cooking something that pulls off a lot of seasoning. You can do this quickly and easily by using the stove top seasoning method (page 4) after you clean the pan. This is not a requirement but it can help speed up the seasoning process.

# Get Cooking

## First Few Cooks

It's good to use **extra oil or butter** to help reduce sticking in the beginning. You can gradually start using less as your pan gets more seasoned. We suggest starting with less sensitive foods like **sautéed veggies or fatty steak**. This is not a requirement, but it helps to strengthen the seasoning.



## Acidic Foods

Acidic foods are known to break down seasoning. This doesn't mean you have to be scared of acidity. Small amounts of acidic foods, such as a squeeze of lime or a dash of wine, won't affect your seasoning much. Generally, it's best to avoid simmering things like tomato sauce for extended periods. Remember, seasoning can always be built back up, so it's ok to cook something with acid every now and then. A more well seasoned pan will handle higher amounts of acidity better than a newly seasoned pan.





## Heat Control

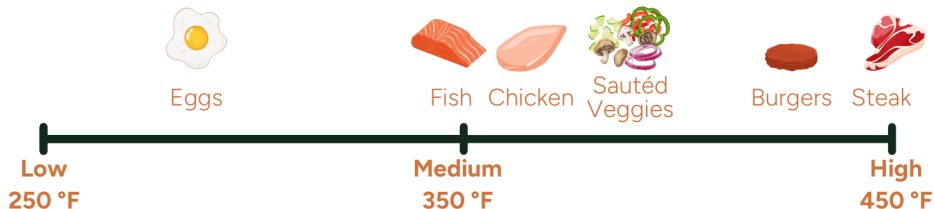
Mastering heat control is a skill that can significantly enhance performance. Our Strata Carbon Clad Pans get hot quickly compared to cast iron or typical carbon steel, so it's important to keep an eye on temperature. The temperature needed is dependent on what you cook, but for the most part you'll want to be cooking at medium to medium-high heat.

### Heat Test

A good way to test the temperature of your pan is to look at the oil. When the oil in your pan is hot enough, it will become thinner and start shimmering with small ripples. The hotter the pan, the thinner the oil becomes.

Signs you're cooking too hot:

- Excessive sticking on a well seasoned pan, even with simple foods like veggies
- Smoking while preheating (unless you're trying to sear something or you have a low smoke point fat in the pan)



# Cleaning

- **Hand Wash Only** - Wash with a sponge, dish soap, and hot water. You can use the scrubby side of the sponge if needed! Use your fingertips to feel for any stuck on food. It's important that the pan feels smooth. Crusty bits are burned on food and can affect performance.
  - **Tip 1:** If you end up with stubborn burnt-on food, adding a **small** amount of hot water/liquid to a hot pan can help to "deglaze" it. If the pan has already cooled down, you can also add water and bring it to a simmer on the stove top. Then, use a spatula to easily scrape off the food.
  - **Tip 2:** Oil stains may appear on the pan's exterior and handle. This is only a **cosmetic issue** but if you would like to maintain a shiny stainless steel appearance, you can use *Bar Keepers Friend to scrub out the stains*. It's important to avoid the inside of the pan, as the cleaner will remove the seasoning.
- **Dry Immediately** - To avoid rusting, dry completely. To ensure the pan is completely dry, heat it up briefly on a burner for about 30 seconds after drying with a towel.
- **Storage** - Let cool, and add a drop of oil. Wipe with a towel to lightly coat the cooking surface with oil, store in a dry place.

**Reminder: Do NOT put in the dishwasher, and do not leave soaking or wet. This can cause rusting.**

## Striping Seasoning

In rare cases, there may be a need to strip you pan 's current seasoning and restart. It's pretty rare to actually need to do this but in case you need to, a good quick way is to simmer some tomato sauce or vinegar for about 30 minutes and then scrub with an abrasive sponge or steel wool.

# Troubleshooting

## **Sticking**

It's common for there to be a bit of sticking, but if you find yourself struggling to scrub food off, here are some typical reasons why this might be happening...

1. Your seasoning is too new.
2. You're cooking too hot.
3. Not enough oil/fat is being used.
4. You're cooking at too low of a temperature.

## **Flaking**

Seasoning flaking off is a common issue, often resulting from seasoning that hasn't fully adhered to the pan. This can occur if the initial layer of seasoning was too thick, the wrong oil was used, or if there's old food stuck to the pan. To fix flaking, remove the loose flakes using an abrasive sponge. Then, either reapply a quick initial seasoning or simply continue cooking.

## **Loss of Seasoning**

Just keep cooking. Early on, it's normal to lose seasoning. Even if food doesn't actually stick, some foods can still make seasoning disappear. Foods like bacon/pork are notorious for seemingly dissolving early seasoning but this is usually only seen in the early stages of seasoning.

## **Scratches**

Scratches are not a problem. Scratches on the seasoning may happen when using metal utensils but it hardly ever affects the performance of the pan. The scratches will heal on their own as you continue to cook.

## **Trouble Building Seasoning**

If you have cooked with the pan for a while and still can't get a good dark seasoning. Try changing up the usual foods you cook or try to be more gentle when cleaning your pan. You can also do "maintenance seasoning" in between cooks to help build more seasoning (see stove top seasoning method on page 4).

## **My Pan is Blue!**

This is commonly referred to as "bluing" your pan. When heated to a high enough temperature, carbon steel will change color from silver to blue. This may happen when you do your initial seasoning. This is ok, some people actually prefer to "blue" their pan because it's thought to improve the surface properties of the metal.

## **Rust**

Surface rust is a common issue with improper storage but can usually be fixed easily. To remove, scrub the rust spots with soap and an abrasive sponge or steel wool for deeper rust. Afterward, make sure to re-season your pan as needed.

# Warranty

This pan comes with a limited lifetime warranty. The warranty covers any damage caused by manufacturing defects. Strata Cookware will repair or replace the defective product at no cost to you. More info on our warranty policy can be found at [www.stratacookware.com/warrantypolicy](http://www.stratacookware.com/warrantypolicy)


# More Info

We are always improving our resources and recommendations. You can find an **up-to-date version of this booklet** and other resources here!



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