

Curing Your Oven

It is important at this point that you cure your oven slowly, by building a series of five increasingly larger fires, starting with a low temperature. If you begin building large fires in your oven right way, you will compromise your oven's longevity and ability to cook well, and cause damage, including cracking.

After you have installed your oven, there is still a great deal of moisture in the mortars, hearth concrete, vermiculite, and the oven chamber and vent. Each of these oven components was recently produced using an air-drying, water-based process. Simply letting the oven stand for a week does not "cure" the moisture out of them oven.

Before you start the curing process, let the complete oven sit for one week. Then, start a series of low and growing fires, using the analog temperature gauge provided in the oven door/frame. The temperature gauge reads the oven's air temperature. For a more accurate temperature reading of the oven refractory surfaces, which can be use for many types of cooking, you can use the optional Digital Infrared Thermometer, which can be purchased in the Forno Bravo Store.

Day 1. Maintain a fire temperature of 300°F throughout the day and as long as possible into the evening.

Day 2. Repeat at 350°F.

Important Note. While it is difficult to maintain consistent, low temperature fires, it is critical for proper curing that you do not go above these temperatures during the first two days.

Day 3. Repeat at 400°F.

Day 4. Repeat at 450°F.

Day 5. Repeat at 500°F.

Close the oven door every evening to preserve dryness and heat.

Important Notes

Use solid wood fuels only. DO NOT use charcoal, pressure treated lumber, chipped wood products, sappy wood such as pine, laminated wood or any material other than dry medium or hard firewood.

Do not use products not specified for use with this oven.

DO NOT USE liquid fuel (firelighter fluid, gasoline, lantern oil, kerosene or similar liquids) to start or maintain a fire.

Never use water to lower temperature inside the oven, or to extinguish the fire.

There must be a period of time between completing the masonry work and beginning the actual firing cure. Longer is better than shorter, particularly for the actual dome cement. The cement and mortar must cure first and this process is actually improved by keeping the cement moist and not letting it dry out.

Also, using a space heater can help, but only so far. It is not an alternative to fire curing. We tested a space heater in an assembled Forno Bravo precast oven for two days, then quickly heated the oven up, (don't do this at home -- it was an experiment to see what would happen to an oven that we have here) and we found that we created a very large amount of steam from the oven, mortars and vermiculite, which went on for hours and hours.