



# STRATA<sup>®</sup>

## Carbon Steel Reference Guide

Cooking with Strata  
Carbon Clad™ Pans

# Index

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## About Our Carbon Clad™ Pans 1

Care and Use 1

Strata Carbon Clad™ 1

## New to Carbon Steel? 2

What is Carbon Steel? 2

How Non-stick is Carbon Steel? 2

## Seasoning 3

What is Seasoning? 3

Oils and Fats 3

Initial Seasoning 4

Seasoning Over Time 5

Maintenance Seasoning 5

## Get Cooking 6

First Few Cooks 6

Acidic Foods 6

Heat Control 7

## Cleaning 8

Cleaning Steps 8

## Troubleshooting 9

Sticking 9

Flaking 9

Loss of Seasoning 9

Scratches 10

Trouble Building Seasoning 10

Should I Strip My Pan and Start Over? 10

Rust 10

My Pan is Blue 11

Cleaning the Stainless Exterior 11

## More Info 11

## Warranty 12

## Follow Us 12

# About Our Carbon Clad™ Pans

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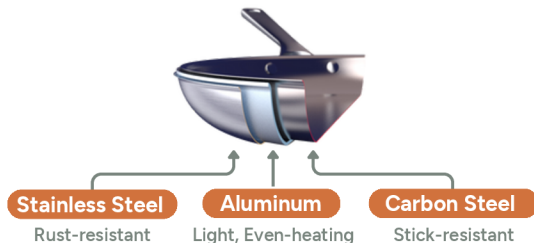
## Care & Use

- ✓ Wash & season before first cook
- ✓ Handwash only
- ✓ Dry and oil cooking surface after washing
- ✓ Store in dry place
- ✓ Suitable for all stovetops, including induction
- ✓ Oven safe to 600° F
- ✓ Metal utensil safe (scratches are OK!)

- ✗ Do not wash in dishwasher
- ✗ Do not soak or leave wet
- ✗ Do not heat over 600° F
- ✗ Avoid high heat on an empty pan
- ✗ Avoid rapid heating (especially on induction)
- ✗ Avoid very acidic foods.

## Strata Carbon Clad™

Unlike traditional carbon steel pans, the Strata Carbon Clad™ Pan has a multi-layered construction. Strata is designed to give you the seasonable cooking surface of carbon steel, with enhanced heat distribution, at a fraction of the weight.



# New to Carbon Steel?

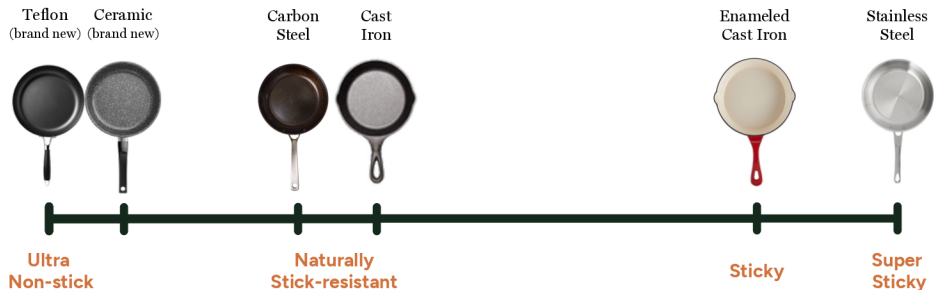
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## What is Carbon Steel?

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 bit of oil or fat, carbon steel can be impressively stick-resistant without any artificial coatings.



# Seasoning

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## 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 cooking. Butter is often preferred for taste and can help reduce sticking.

However, when it comes to **building the best seasoning**, you'll want something with a **high smoke point and a neutral taste**. Grapeseed is our favorite, but here are some other oils we recommend for building a strong seasoning...

### Seasoning Oils

Do Use:		Avoid	
✓	Grapeseed Oil	✗	Olive Oil
✓	Vegetable Oil	✗	Flaxseed Oil
✓	Sunflower Oil	✗	Coconut Oil
✓	Peanut Oil	✗	Seasoning Paste
✓	Canola 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** with a towel, then briefly heat on a burner for about 30 seconds to ensure it's fully dry.
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 or handle.
5. Take a clean towel and **wipe down the surface again** until it looks almost dry.
6. Place the pan **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** with a towel, then briefly heat on a burner for about 30 seconds to ensure it's fully dry.
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 or 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- low 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 the burner for about **8-10 minutes** or until the oil has fully hardened.
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 might feel unpredictable early on and it's common to lose seasoning, resulting in bare spots. Don't worry, this is all part of the process. The best way to build seasoning is to **just keep cooking**.

Initial Seasoning



2 Cooks



10 Cooks



20 Cooks



30 Cooks



## Maintenance Seasoning

It can be helpful to manually add a seasoning layer after cooking something that has pulled off a lot of seasoning. You can do this quickly and easily by using the stove top seasoning method (page 4) after cleaning the pan. While not a requirement, it can help speed up the seasoning process.

# Get Cooking

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## First Few Cooks

We recommend using **extra oil or butter** to help reduce sticking in the beginning. You can gradually start using less as your pan becomes more seasoned. We suggest starting with foods that are less prone to sticking like **sauteed veggies or fatty steak** to help strengthen the seasoning.



## Acidic Foods

**Acidic foods are known to break down seasoning.** This doesn't mean you need to be scared of acidity. Small amounts of acidic food, 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 acidic every now and then. A more well seasoned pan will handle higher amounts of acidity better than a newly seasoned pan.





## Heat Control

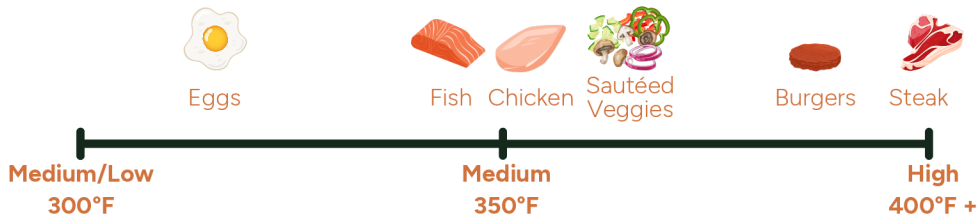
Mastering heat control is a skill that can significantly enhance performance. Our Strata Carbon Clad™ Pans heat quickly compared to cast iron or thick carbon steel, so it's important to keep an eye on temperature. The temperature needed depends on what you cook, but for the most part you'll want to be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

### Heat Test (watch the oil)

Most refined oils begin to thin and shimmer around 300°F, and start smoking once they reach their smoke point (about 400°F-520°F depending on the oil). Be careful with olive oil and butter as they'll smoke and burn at much lower temperatures than typical refined oils.

### Signs you're cooking too hot:

- Excessive sticking, even on a well seasoned pan
- Significant smoking while preheating



# Cleaning

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- **Hand Wash Only** - Handwash with a sponge, dish soap, and hot water. 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.
- **Dry Immediately** - To avoid rusting, dry right after washing. Do not leave it to air dry.
- **Storage** - Once it's dry, add a few drops of oil. Wipe with a towel to lightly coat the cooking surface and store in a dry place.

## PRO Cleaning Tip:

If you have stubborn burnt-on food, you can “degaze” it by **adding a small amount of water to a hot pan, or bringing it to a simmer on the stove top if it's already cooled down.** Then, use a spatula to easily scrape off the food.

This quick trick takes about a minute and is a great alternative to scrubbing, especially for newer pans with more delicate seasoning.



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

# Troubleshooting

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## **Sticking**

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

1. **Your seasoning is still new (<15 cooks)**
2. **You're cooking too hot**
3. **Not enough oil/fat is being used**

It's important to remember, carbon steel won't behave exactly like a non-stick pan, but it can get close with developed seasoning, a little oil/fat, and heat control.

## **Flaking**

Seasoning flaking is fairly common and typically happens when layers are applied too thick, if the wrong oil is used (like flaxseed or seasoning pastes), or when food residue builds up. To fix it, scrub off any loose flakes with an abrasive sponge, then apply a maintenance seasoning over what remains.

## **Loss of Seasoning**

Just keep cooking. It's normal to lose seasoning early on. 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 beginning stages of your pan's seasoning.

## **Scratches**

Scratches are not a problem. Scratches on the seasoning can happen when using metal utensils, but it unlikely to affects the performance of the pan. The scratches will “heal” on their own as you continue to cook.

## **Trouble Building Seasoning**

If you’ve been cooking with the pan for a while and still can’t get a strong seasoning, try changing up the usual foods you cook. High-heat cooking, like searing steaks or sautéing fatty vegetables, builds seasoning faster than low-heat foods like eggs. Cooking with plenty of high smoke point oil can also help strengthen the seasoning in the early stages.

You can also do a quick “maintenance seasoning” in between cooks to help build more seasoning (see stove top seasoning method on page 4) or try to be more gentle when cleaning your pan.

## **Should I Strip My Pan and Start Over?**

Most of the time the answer is no. In rare cases, there may be a need to strip your pan’s current seasoning and restart. A good way is to simmer something acidic like tomato sauce for 10-15 min or use Bar Keepers Friend and an abrasive.

## **Rust**

Surface rust is a common issue with improper storage but it’s usually easy to fix. To remove, scrub the rust spots with soap and an abrasive sponge or steel wool for deeper rust. Use Bar Keepers Friend for stubborn rust. Afterward, make sure to re-season your pan as needed.

### **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.

### **Cleaning the Stainless Exterior**

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 Bar Keepers Friend will remove the seasoning.

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## 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!



visit [stratacookware.com](http://stratacookware.com) for more info

# Warranty

This pan comes with a **limited lifetime warranty**. The warranty covers any damage caused by manufacturing defects. Strata Cookware will 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)

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