

CURING YOUR PICCOLO WOOD-FIRED OVEN

CURING

Your Mugnaini wood-fired oven is made from Refrattari Cotto or refractory clay. The water used to form the clay must be cooked out before your oven can be put into use.

This process is called curing. The first step involves cooking the water out of the clay and the next step involves tempering the clay. This is done very simply by a process of fires started inside the oven.

The curing process will take multiple small fires over a 4 day period. Overheating an uncured oven can cause thermal shock or cracks in the clay components and should be avoided. (Small hairline cracks in the surface of the clay will appear after normal usage and are not cause for alarm.)



CAUTION: FOLLOW THE COMPLETE CURING SCHEDULE BEFORE COOKING IN THIS OVEN. FAILURE TO DO SO MAY CAUSE PERMANENT DAMAGE TO YOUR OVEN AND WILL VOID THE WARRANTY

SUPPLIES

• WEBER FIRESTARTERS

We consider these non-toxic cubes an essential part of your wood supply. Simply light with a match and they will produce a quality flame for five minutes and ignite the kindling. Weber Firestarters are available through Mugnaini Imports and hardware stores across the country.

• KILN DRIED HARDWOOD KINDLING

Kiln dried hardwood kindling is another essential part of the fire starting process. It is used initially to ignite the hardwood and later to refresh a fire. Grocery stores or wood vendors supply hardwood kindling in convenient boxes but make sure it is *hardwood* not soft pine or fir. Construction grade lumber is not acceptable.



• DOUBLE SPLIT SEASONED HARDWOOD

Hardwoods such as oak, fruit woods and nut woods are traditional choices and work well. We recommend using your local variety of hardwood with the exception of eucalyptus.

- **Double Split** refers to the size of the wood and indicates that a regular fireplace size log has been split (cut lengthwise) a second time.
– **PICCOLO ovens take 12" lengths but 16" is acceptable.**

- **Seasoned** refers to the condition of dryness (water content) in the wood and literally means it has been left outdoors to dry for a season or more. This is the most important aspect of wood and has a large bearing on the success of starting a hot fire. *Green wood* is heavy, wet, smells nice, has been freshly cut and should be avoided or left to season. It is difficult to burn and when you do, the wood will sizzle and smoke excessively.

SOFTWOODS SUCH AS PINE, SPRUCE, POPLAR, BIRCH AND FIR ARE NOT TO BE USED IN THIS OVEN. NEVER USE ANY TYPE OF STARTER FLUID.

STARTING THE FIRE

- Remove oven door.
- Place one Firestarter in the center of the oven floor.
- Place one pound (small handful) of hardwood kindling over firestarter in a pyramid fashion. Make sure not to suffocate the firestarter.
- Light firestarter with a match and let it burn.

You may need to reposition the wood once the fire is started. This is a good time to develop your skills. It is OK if the wood does not entirely burn up. If the fire goes out just light another firestarter.



NOTE: The fires used for curing an oven are not representative of how you will fire your oven in the future. They are meant to be cool fires starting out as small as possible. Adding wood or stoking the fire is not to be done during this process. As the fire goes out it may become smoky. Our goal is to pulse the heat in small amounts increasing it slowly.

INDOOR OVENS

After the fire is started place your door just outside the arch in a diagonal fashion with one side touching the arch. Make sure to leave at least 4" of open space on the other side so the fire can breathe. If the fire gets smoky reduce the opening until the draft pulls the smoke up the chimney. A little experimentation will demonstrate the proper angle for the door; wider when the fire is going and less after the fire is out.

OUTDOOR OVENS

If winds are causing you trouble maintaining your fire place your door just outside the arch in a diagonal fashion with one side touching the arch. Make sure to leave at least 4" of open space on the other side so the fire can breathe. This will block the wind but not damp down the fire.



CURING SCHEDULE

PICCOLO MODEL

DAY ONE (3 1/2 hour time commitment)

Begin (note time)

- 1 firestarter + 1.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

One hour later

- 1 firestarter + 1.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

One hour later

- 1 firestarter + 1.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

One hour later

- 1 firestarter + 1.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

After the fire goes out place the door through the arch into the fully closed position.

The door should stay in place until the next day's fire.

DAY TWO (6 hour time commitment)

Begin (note time)

- 1 firestarter + 1.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

One hour later

- 1 firestarter + 1.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

90 minutes later

- 1 firestarter + 1.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

90 minutes later

- 1 firestarter + 1.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

90 minutes later

- 1 firestarter + 1.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

After the fire goes out place the door through the arch into the fully closed position.

The door should stay in place until the next day's fire.

DAY THREE (6 hour time commitment)

Begin (note time)

- 1 firestarter + 1.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

90 minutes later

- 1 firestarter + 1 1/2.lb hardwood kindling (note the amount of wood increases)
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

90 minutes later

- 1 firestarter + 1 1/2.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

90 minutes later

- 1 firestarter + 1 1/2.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

90 minutes later

- 1 firestarter + 1 1/2.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

After the fire goes out place the door through the arch into the fully closed position.

The door should stay in place until the next day's fire.

DAY FOUR (6 hour time commitment to pizza temperature)

Begin (note time)

- 1 firestarter + 1.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

90 minutes later

- 1 firestarter + 1 1/2.lb hardwood kindling
- Start fire let burn (approx. 15 min)

90 minutes later

- 2 firestarters + 1 1/2.lb hardwood kindling + 1 hardwood log
- Start fire let burn

• Add more firestarters and kindling if the log does not burn through

90 minutes later

- 2 firestarters + 1 1/2.lb hardwood kindling + 1 hardwood log
- Start fire let burn

• Add more firestarters and kindling if the log does not burn through

90 minutes later

- 2 firestarters + 1 1/2.lb hardwood kindling + 2 hardwood logs
- Start fire let burn

• Add more firestarters and kindling if the logs do not keep burning

• Push the two logs to the outside of the oven floor to fill the entire dome with flame

• Keep fire going by adding more wood when the logs burn down to coals. Allow the coals to spread across the oven floor

• Keep burning wood until the inside of the dome has burned off all of the black carbon

• Bake pizzas and keep a fire going for up to four hours

After the fire goes out place the door just inside the arch so the flue is open to the cooking chamber. This will allow the fire to burn down and vent up the chimney.

Note: Never burn more than two or three small logs at the same time. It is possible to over fire the oven. If flames are shooting up the chimney flue you are over firing the oven.



PICCOLO MODEL

HELPFUL HINTS

TIMING

Starting the curing schedule on a Thursday night and working through the weekend is very effective. If you miss one of your curing fires just repeat the last step and continue.

The first two days are the most important and should be completed together. Like wise the last two days should be completed together. If this is the case add an extra one hour burn to the beginning of the Day Three cycle.



TEMPERATURE

The temperature in the oven will vary greatly when starting a fire. If you are reading the temperature with a thermometer do not be alarmed. Most of what you read with an infrared thermometer gun is the surface temperature which will regulate down in the pauses between fires.

FIRE PLACEMENT

If you have trouble reaching into the oven place the fire within your reach in order to start it. Then push it deeper in the oven with the metal peel supplied with your oven. It is good to vary the placement slightly from one fire to the next.

ASHES

Keep a metal can with a tight fitting lid to collect the ashes with. It is OK to let them build up for a couple of firings. Use the metal peel to shovel the ashes out of the oven.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

We want your experience to be rewarding. Please visit Club il Forno on our website or call the office if you have any questions or need help understanding these steps.



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