

Stoneware Q&A

Manufacturing

Q: How is Stoneware made? What is in Stoneware?

A: Pampered Chef® Stoneware is made from natural clay. When fired at over 2,000°F, this clay produces a buff-colored Stoneware that is unaffected by moisture and completely safe for use with food. The color can be slightly different from piece to piece, based on natural variations in the clay. After firing, each piece is hand-finished, producing a one-of-a-kind creation. This is why no two pieces of Stoneware look or feel exactly alike.

Q: Where is Stoneware manufactured?

A: All Pampered Chef Stoneware is, and has always been, manufactured in the United States.

Q: Where is the clay mined?

A: Clay used for our Stoneware is mined in the USA.

Q: Does Stoneware contain any lead?

A: Lead is not used in the manufacture of this product. However, since Stoneware is made from natural clay, it may contain trace amounts of lead. The Stoneware has been tested and meets or exceeds all regulations and is food-contact safe.

Q: Is the glaze on Stoneware safe?

A: We stand by the safety and quality of our Stoneware line, the same way we stand behind all our products. The Pampered Chef works closely with our product manufacturers. And, we have tested all of our Stoneware products to ensure they are safe.

Preparing to Use Your Stoneware and Seasoning

Q: What do I need to do to my Stoneware before I use it for the first time?

A: Rinse Stoneware in warm water, then towel dry and start to use it with any of your favorite foods. Baking higher fat items first will help to start develop the seasoning layer. Also, unlike other clay bakers made of terra cotta clay, our Stoneware does not require soaking before use.

Q: How should Stoneware be seasoned?

A: Season stoneware by baking a high-fat food such as refrigerated dough for dinner rolls, biscuits or cookies, on its surface. Afterwards, greasing is usually unnecessary. As your Stoneware becomes increasingly seasoned, it forms a natural nonstick surface. The color of your Stoneware will also gradually change from its natural color to a deep brown over time. Seasoning progression may vary and is based on the types of foods prepared on your Stone. Do not use aerosol nonstick spray.

Q: Why is the seasoning on my Stoneware uneven?

A: Seasoning is a gradual progression. The extent of seasoning will vary based on the types of foods baked on the surface and how much of the surface is covered by food. For example: if your Stone is used mostly for pizza, the center may not season as quickly as the outer edges.

Baking with Stoneware

Q: What are the benefits of baking with Stoneware?

A: The benefits are numerous. Because it heats evenly and then retains that heat, Stoneware produces exceptionally crisp crusts and moist interiors, promotes even baking and browning, and roasts foods to perfection.

Q: How do I choose the right piece of Stoneware for my cooking?

A: Always use a Stoneware piece that closely matches the size of the food item being prepared. To prevent your Stoneware piece from breaking during baking, cover at least two-thirds of the surface area with food.

Q: Should I preheat my oven before baking with Stoneware?

A: Yes. However do not preheat empty Stoneware in the oven, because this may cause the Stoneware to crack or break.

Q: How do I adapt my old recipes, made in standard bakeware, so that they will work with my new Stoneware?

A: Use the same baking times and temperatures with stoneware as you would with other bakeware. The only exception is if the food requires a baking time less than 10 minutes. You may need to bake these items an additional 1 to 2 minutes.

Q: Can Stoneware be used to cook frozen foods?

A: Thick, dense foods such as chicken parts, fish fillets or pork chops, should be thawed completely before cooking. Putting a frozen pizza or frozen precooked foods such as chicken nuggets, French fries and fish sticks on Stoneware is fine. Just be sure to evenly distribute small pieces over the surface and immediately place in a preheated oven.

Q: Does thermal shock apply to microwave cooking? Can I microwave dense, frozen foods in my Stoneware?

A: Thermal shock occurs due to extreme temperature changes, and this applies to both microwave and oven cooking. Even in a microwave environment, thermal shock could occur if heating a dense, frozen piece of food (such as pork tenderloin). Although it may not happen with the first use, repeated use in this manner can compromise the structure of the Stone, eventually leading to breakage.

Q: Can I freeze a casserole in a Stoneware baker, then transfer it directly from the freezer to the oven to bake?

A: No. Do not transfer any Stoneware piece directly from the freezer to the oven. Foods can be frozen in Stoneware pieces but must be placed in the refrigerator to thaw completely before being baked. Otherwise thermal shock may occur because of the sudden severe temperature change.

Q: Can Stoneware be used in the microwave?

A: Stoneware is microwave-safe as long as the Stoneware does not touch the sides or the door of the microwave, in particular when the turntable is on.

Q: Can Stoneware be used when broiling foods?

A: No. Stoneware cannot be used under the broiler or directly over a heat source, such as a range-top burner or grill.

Q: How do I use my Stoneware in my convection oven?

A: When using Stoneware in a convection oven, reduce the oven temperature and baking time as specified by the oven manufacturer. If foods are browning too quickly, lightly cover the surface of the food with aluminum foil for part of the baking time.

Q: Can Stoneware be used if there is gluten allergy in the family?

A: In any case where there is a severe allergy, we do not recommend preparing the allergen food on the Stone. There is a possibility that oils or residues may adhere to the seasoning and could transfer over to the next food item being prepared.

If you decide to purchase Stoneware, please label the underside of the Stoneware for non-gluten foods only using a Sharpie or other permanent marker. This Stoneware should also be stored away from other vessels used to bake gluten items to avoid cross-contamination.

Troubleshooting When Baking with Stoneware

Q: Why is my food browning on the top, but not on the bottom?

A: Try the following tips one at a time in the order given until the problem is corrected.

1. Place the Stone on the lowest or second-lowest rack position in the oven.
2. Check the temperature of the oven using an oven thermometer, or have the oven calibrated.
3. Decrease the baking temperature by 25 degrees and increase the bake time according to doneness.
4. Cover with aluminum foil for the last few minutes of the bake time.

Q: Food is sticking to my Stoneware. Why, and what can I do to remedy this?

A: Slight sticking may occur for the first several uses. Please follow our seasoning suggestions in the Use and Care to start the seasoning process.

If you have been using your Stoneware for some time and sticking is occurring due to oil or residue buildup, we recommend trying the deep cleaning method described in Caring for Your Stoneware.

Deep-Cleaning Your Stoneware

Q: How can I deep-clean Stoneware? How can I remove odors from my Stoneware? I noticed a flavor transfer from the last food made on the Stoneware.

A: Occasional deep cleaning using a baking soda paste is recommended, following these directions:

1. Allow Stoneware to cool to room temperature before cleaning.
2. Soak Stoneware in clear, hot water to loosen baked-on foods.
3. Scrape off excess food using the Pan Scraper (provided with Stoneware) or a kitchen brush.
4. Prepare a baking soda paste by mixing ½ cup baking soda with 3 tablespoons water. Spread the paste on the Stone and let it stand for 10-15 minutes. Scrape off remaining paste and rinse Stoneware in warm water. Repeat as needed. Dry thoroughly before storing.

Caring for Your Stoneware

Q: My Stone is sticky from cooking spray. How do I remove the stickiness?

A: There is no method to remove the sticky buildup due to use of nonstick spray. Because of this, our Use and Care advises not to use aerosol nonstick spray.

Q: Will I harm the surface of my Stoneware if I cut foods on it?

A: No. Foods may be cut directly on the Stoneware for serving.

Q: Without soap, how can my Stoneware really be clean and safe from harmful bacteria?

A: The surface of the Stoneware is virtually nonporous, so no food particles or juices can be imbedded in the Stoneware. Stoneware is safe to use as long as all food particles are removed from the surface and it is dried thoroughly before storing.

Q: My Stone is flaking black stuff. Why is this happening, and what can I do about it?

A: Over time, the seasoning can build up to the point it starts to flake off. This can happen for a couple of reasons. It can simply be the result of time and continued use. Another contributing factor is the storage environment of the stone. If it is stored in the oven and subjected to pre-heating times/temperatures and even full baking cycles while it is empty, the seasoning layer can burn and dry up which leads to flaking. Storing in the oven is not recommended. Follow the Deep Cleaning steps listed above to remove black flakes.

Q: My Stone has a speckled appearance. What is this?

A: Speckled discoloration is most likely caused by the climate and season the clay was mined. This is not harmful, and the Stone will season appropriately with use.

Q: Can I still use my Stoneware if (insert situation from below)? How can I deep clean it?

It has been in flood waters?

It has been in a fire?

It has rodent droppings on it?

There is mold on it?

A plastic or nylon tool melted on it?

A: Discard the Stoneware in these situations.

Stoneware and Other Appliances

Q: Can Stoneware be used in an AGA oven (UK brand oven)?

A: Our Stoneware products can be used in an AGA oven with some guidelines. Each section of the AGA oven has a pre-set temperature. Stoneware is heat-safe to 450°F / 232°C. It cannot be exposed to a broiler / grilling element or another direct heat source. Please check the interior oven dimensions, as some Stoneware pieces may be too large for the AGA compartments. Stoneware should not touch side walls or oven door. Always consult oven manufacturer instructions for recommended baking vessels to be used.

Q: Can Stoneware be used in a propane fueled oven?

A: Our Test Kitchen has not had direct experience using Stoneware in a propane fueled oven. If a customer chooses to use their Stoneware in this type of oven we can provide the following guidelines; however, we cannot confirm the safety of this application.

- A minimum space of 3" (7.5 cm) should be allowed between the Stone and all sides of the oven to allow proper air circulation.
- Always place Stoneware on an oven rack, never directly on the oven floor.
- The flame of the oven must be positioned far enough from the Stone to prevent direct contact with it.

Always consult oven manufacturer instructions for recommended baking vessels to be used.

Q: Can Stoneware be used in a GE Advantium (or halogen) oven?

A: We have previously tested our Stoneware in the GE Advantium Oven, which is a type of halogen oven. The Advantium Oven uses a halogen light located on the bottom of the oven to generate additional heat to create "speed cooking." This light surges on and off during the cooking cycle. Due to its position in the oven and direct proximity to the halogen bulb, the potential for breakage when using Stoneware is higher than in other ovens. In the Advantium Use and Care it specifies to use thin metal or glass bakeware. Please use recommended vessels provided in the oven's use and care manual.

Stoneware can be acceptably used in the microwave portion only if that is an available feature in your model.

Always consult oven manufacturer instructions for recommended baking vessels to be used.

Q: Can Stoneware be used on the grill?

A: No. Stoneware cannot be used on a grill, as this is a direct heat source.

Q: Stoneware was placed through self-cleaning cycle in oven by accident. What should I do?

A: When Stoneware goes through the self-cleaning cycle, it is exposed to higher temperatures than recommended in the Use and Care. It is important that you inspect the Stoneware for any hairline cracks or fractures. If cracks or fractures are present, please discontinue use of the Stone. If none are present, the Stoneware can be used. You may notice that the seasoning layer has been minimized from this process. It will require seasoning again to develop the natural nonstick surface.

As a general guideline, do not store Stoneware in the oven in order to prevent the Stone from going through accidental self-cleaning cycles.

Q: Do all wells need to be filled when using the Stoneware Muffin Pan?

A: When using the Stoneware Muffin Pan, it is recommended to fill at least 9 of the 12 wells. Like all Stoneware, at least two-thirds of Stoneware surface should be covered with food to avoid the risk of breakage. If there are wells that you cannot fill, simply leave them empty and bake according to your recipe directions.

Q: Can muffin liners be used with the Stoneware Muffin Pan?

A: The Stoneware Muffin Pan can be used with or without paper or foil cups. If using without liners, each well will need to be generously greased until the seasoning has developed. For best results, brush with vegetable cooking oil or grease with shortening.

Product Durability

Q: How durable is Stoneware?

A: Stoneware is durable but not indestructible. The most important fact to remember about your Stoneware is that it doesn't like extreme and sudden temperature changes or what is called thermal shock. When thermal shock occurs, stoneware may develop small hairline cracks or break.

Q: Can Stoneware break?

A: Yes, but with a little tender care you can prevent your Stoneware from cracking or breaking. Never immerse hot Stoneware in water or pour water or other liquids into or onto it. Avoid dropping Stoneware or knocking it against a hard surface. Don't stack Stoneware pieces or place other heavy utensils, such as bowls or cookware, on top of them. If you must store your Stoneware on a rack in the oven, be sure to remove all of the pieces before turning on the oven.

Additional tips to prevent breakage:

Prevent breakage from thermal shock by avoiding extreme temperature changes.

- Do not preheat stone.
- At least two-thirds of Stoneware surface should be covered with food to avoid thermal shock. Always evenly distribute food over Stoneware surface; avoid clustering foods.
- Do not place dense, frozen food items (chicken breasts, pot pies, roasts or chops) on Stoneware. Always thaw dense, frozen food in refrigerator prior to baking.
- Foods refrigerated in Stoneware may be placed directly in a preheated oven.
- Do not place any other pan or rack on top of Stoneware while baking.

Remember that Stoneware is heat-resistant to 450°F. Using at higher heats could result in breakage.

Q: There is a tiny crack like a hairline fracture in my Stone. Is it still safe to use? Or there is a chip in my Stoneware, is it still safe to use? Can I glue it back together?

A: Do not use chipped or damaged Stoneware. Do not glue back together.

Q: Oil/liquid is seeping out the bottom of the Stone. What should I do?

A: Please inspect the product for hairline fractures or cracks. If these exist, the grease and liquids from foods will travel to this area and could seep through the Stone. Discontinue Stoneware use in this situation.

Sometimes grease and oil may be on the exterior bottom just from everyday cooking. Use the recommended deep cleaning process to remove any excess grease. Follow the instructions under Deep-Cleaning Your Stoneware.

Replacement Parts

Q: Why can't I get a replacement lid for the Deep Covered Baker or Round Covered Baker?

A: Due to variations in Stoneware, our vendors work hard to ensure the lid fit is optimal when leaving the factory. We could not guarantee the best fit on a Baker if a replacement lid was purchased. Therefore, this is not an available option at this time.