

**WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for February 1, 2021**  
**Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.**

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, and Healthy Relationships we'll talk about cooking with cast iron and some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

Cooking fads have always intrigued me. There are a variety of driving forces like nutrition or convenience or just plain novelty. One tried and true kitchen tool is the cast iron pan. During the past couple of decades there has been a resurgence of interest in this unique kitchen vessel.

Last week, Chris Kendle, Family and Consumer Sciences Educator in Tuscarawas County, taught a session for our East Ohio Women in Agriculture Webinar Series about cooking with cast iron. I found it so interesting and thought that you would to. Today I will share the basics and include some ways that you can learn more.

You can do so much with cast iron from frying to baking to grilling. You can use them on a stove top or in the oven or even over a campfire. They are heavy, but this means they retain heat well and are perfect for searing meat and keeping food warm. And one of the best parts is that using them actually helps them become better over time.

**Selecting:** There are more options than you may think when it comes to cast iron, including a variety of shapes and sizes. Most people think of cast iron skillets, but there are Dutch ovens, grill plates, griddle pans and even woks. Therefore, knowing what kinds of food you want to make is the best first place to start in determining what you need. An 8 to 10-inch skillet is a very versatile option. One thing to keep in mind is the size of the burner on your stove top. You will want to match the skillet size to your burner, making sure the skillet is no more than 1 inch larger than the burner. You can find cast iron that is bare, pre-seasoned or enameled. Cast iron may come to you (in the form of inheritance or gifts), through a thrift store or garage sale find, or brand new from a department store or online. Any age is suitable for cooking.

**Seasoning:** The amazing thing about cast iron is the act and art of seasoning. This is a layer of lubricated residue on the surface that flavors food while creating a non-stick surface. It involves rubbing a very thin layer of oil (like canola, soybean, flaxseed or others) or melted shortening on the surface and then heating this in the oven. Heating the oil changes it so that it bonds to the

surface and creates a non-stick surface. Maintaining seasoning is essential to keeping cast iron in useable condition. But with some patience, cast iron surfaces that have rough spots or even rust can be cleaned and seasoned for use.

Care: Contrary to popular belief, you can use gentle soap to clean cast iron. It is best to use a nylon bristle brush or scraper for stuck on bits of food. Never put cast iron in a dishwasher. It should be dried promptly and then rubbed with a very light layer of cooking oil, preferably while warm. Cool and then store in a dry location.

Chris has produced videos demonstrating Cast Iron Skillet Pork Chops (with a peach balsamic glaze) and Lamb Chops. You can find these very helpful videos by searching “OSU Extension Cooking with Chris” on youtube.com. This webinar was a part of the East Ohio Women in Agriculture series.

The “East Ohio Women in Agriculture Program Series” continues next Thursday with QPR training, which stands for “Question, Persuade and Refer” a suicide prevention training. A total of 10 webinars and 3 field days will be held through May on a variety of financial, production, and home-related topics to help women in agriculture. Some of these upcoming topics include insurance, hands-on tractor operation skills, loans, fruit tree pruning and much more. Visit our website to register for one or more of these free programs.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at [coshocton.osu.edu](http://coshocton.osu.edu). Make it a healthy day!