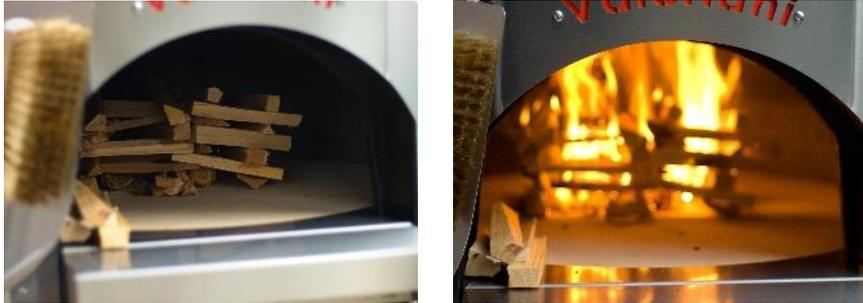




Operating your Wood Fired Oven

Fire Position and Use of Wood

To begin light a small fire in the centre of the oven using dry kindling in a “Jenga” style basket pattern using a natural or organic firelighter.



Slowly add small pieces of seasoned dry hardwood to build the fire up. Once the fire is established and the oven at the required temperature, you can use larger pieces for a slower burn to maintain the heat.

Continue feeding the fire in the middle until you achieve a ‘white spot’ on the roof of the oven. The fire should then be positioned to one side of the oven to allow for cooking room. The oven is at its optimum temperature for pizza when the whole oven is white (the soot has burned off).



TIP: You can also use an infra-red thermometer gun to check your oven floor temperature especially if cooking other dishes whilst you build up the heat for pizza.



We recommend alternating the fire from right to left and vice-versa after each use as the part of the oven most exposed to the fire will suffer the greater wear over a long period of time. A fire separator/log rack (see picture above) is recommended to help keep the embers and ash away from the food being cooked. It also helps to keep a flow of air (needed for heat) under the fire if your logs are perched on it. Fire separators/log racks are available in our online accessories shop.

CAUTION:

DO NOT use paraffin or any fuel based firelighters as this will affect the cooking floor and potentially the taste of the food being cooked



 **TIP:**

It is always useful to keep the next piece of wood in the mouth of the oven before placing it on the fire as this will help warm up and ignite easily and burn better once it is added to the fire.

We only recommend using properly seasoned hard wood logs, with a moisture content of less than 20%. (Examples are: Oak, Beech, Olive or Apple or Cherry). Different woods will give off different aromas and will give a slightly different flavour to the foods being cooked.



Example of Organic Firelighter

Example of Kiln dried Hardwood logs



Example of Hardwood briquette logs

CAUTION:

DO NOT use soft woods such as spruce or pine, and high carbon hardwoods like poplar or birch as they are not recommended for cooking. These types of wood give off high levels of carbon, bad odours and residues which are not only dangerous but will affect the taste of the food being prepared.



TIP: If you experience excessive amounts of smoke escaping from the mouth of the oven this is the result of downdraft and the flue not pulling hard enough. Some causes can be a cold flue, try firing a gas blow torch into the flue which will help the flue heat up and 'draw' more efficiently. Alternatively draft restriction which can be caused by the rain cap, try removing the cap or swapping it for a spinning cowl. If the oven is positioned inside a property, opening a window or door to the outside air will help a great deal too.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

To comply with the UK DEFRA smoke exemption certificate, you must burn properly seasoned or kiln dried hardwood logs with a moisture content of less than 20%. This can be ordered from all good stockists.

Using the oven

Tools:

It is important to understand that the oven will become an extremely hot working environment when at the required temperature. A good quality set of tools that add to the safety and pleasure of your cooking experience are therefore a necessity.

A suggested 'general' set of tools for a wood fired oven user are:

- Pizza shovel/paddle – wide enough for your regular max pizza sizes (dictated by the width of the oven mouth) and of sufficient length to allow for reach into the far side of the oven.
- Turning peel - of sufficient length to allow for reach into the far side of the oven. Our standard tool kits includes a peel for turning pizza or adding logs to the fire but it is good hygiene practice to have one for each job
- Brass bristled bush - of sufficient length to allow for reach into the far side of the oven.



Additional items which we, as seasoned users find useful include:

- Steel bucket and hand shovel for clearing spent embers and ash
- Hand brush (metal or natural bristle type is best as nylon can melt if the oven is warm)
- Oven gloves/gauntlet (for handling trays, cast iron ware, pans etc)

A range of carefully selected accessories and oven tools are available from our store at <https://www.orchardovens.co.uk>



 **TIP:** A brass brush is recommended for cleaning the inside of the oven, sweeping the floor during use and for removing excess ash residue after use. Any minor food spillages on the cooking floor will quickly carbonise with the heat of the oven and can easily be swept away with the brush.

 **TIP:** For stubborn spillages you can use a damp NOT WET cloth on the end of the brush to remove them. This technique can also be used to bring down the temperature of the floor a little if you have over heated it.

Caution:
DO NOT use a **STEEL** bristled brush or scraper to remove ash/residues. This will cause damage and/or excess wear to the cooking floor of your oven.

 **TIP:** Always try to store your pizza paddle and turning peel upright and/or off the ground to avoid damaging the edges. You can purchase tool stands and brackets from our accessories store.

 **TIP:** It is essential to keep the leading edge of the pizza paddle clean and sharp, as damage and burrs will catch on your pizzas when you try to slide them onto the peel. Launching a pizza into the oven from a damaged paddle may cause the pizza to 'catch' and cause toppings to be flung over the oven floor (melted cheese on your oven floor can be a pain!)

 **TIP:** We suggest a turning peel should be used for placing logs onto the fire and turning the pizzas or oven pans during cooking.

Your oven tools may need replacing from time-to-time dependant on usage and replacements are available to purchase from our accessories shop.

Ovenware and Cookware

We love pizza, but we also adore using our ovens for other wood fired dishes. When cooking other recipes in your oven such as roasted garlic and rosemary potatoes or porchetta, try to use cast iron or good quality heavyweight durable steel containers and trays as these will not warp in the heat and provide for years of service.

Don't forget to make the best use of your ovenware overnight too by taking advantage of the residual heat stored in your oven after the main use. Slow roasted meat, pulses and vegetables can be cooked overnight. A breakfast ham cooked this way is delish!

When putting ovenware into the oven move it to the mouth and entrance of the oven and then position it within the oven by using a turning peel.

A turning peel (see image) is useful for bringing cookware back to the front of the oven for removal or checking and it saves the hairs on your arms from reaching inside the hot oven!





Having a good set of pizza platters or boards (i.e. Wood or Slate) ready to receive your fresh cooked pizza is also a good idea. These have no lip and tend to be flatter than normal plates and you will find it easier to use a pizza cutter with them.



TIP: Check that any ceramics you use can take the high temperatures within the oven. Many products on the market are only designed for domestic ovens reaching a maximum of 250°C. Your Orchard oven can reach temperatures in excess of 600°C therefore its best to check first.

Help is here when you need us:

As a team of wood fired oven owning enthusiasts and being passionate about our customers having the best experiences with their ovens, we are very happy to share our knowledge and experiences of operating a wood fired oven under all sorts of conditions.

If you need further assistance in getting the best out of your oven, please do call or drop us an email and one of our team will be happy to help.

If you are enjoying your oven please tell us by leaving a review on our website, it will be great to hear from you and you will be entered into our monthly draw for an Orchard Ovens pizza stone.

Call or email:

TELEPHONE: 01772 250000

E-MAIL: info@orchardovens.co.uk

Further help and support is also available here: [https:// www.orchardovens.co.uk](https://www.orchardovens.co.uk)

Disclaimer:

This information is provided as a guide only. Orchard Ovens accept no liability for damage caused to an oven or for the spoiling of food cooked in it by failure to follow the guidance as written or our direct support as may have been given.

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