



How to clean and maintain your stainless steel outdoor kitchen appliances and grills

Some Basics: why does stainless steel resist corrosion?

stainless steel must be cleaned to keep it looking beautiful and to maintain its ability to resist corrosion. The beautiful surface of stainless steel is protected from corrosion by a thin layer of chromium oxide. Oxygen from the atmosphere combines with the chromium in the stainless steel to form this passive chromium oxide film that protects the stainless steel surface from further corrosion. When the surface is contaminated by dirt, sand, or other materials, this passivation process is hindered and corrosive agents are trapped, allowing corrosion to occur.

Some form of routine cleaning is necessary to preserve the appearance and integrity of the surface. Stainless steel is easily cleaned by many different methods. The surface will actually thrive on frequent cleaning. Unlike some other materials, it is impossible to “wear out” stainless steel by excessive cleaning.

General Maintenance Guidelines and Good Practices

Things to Avoid

- Avoid allowing food or beverage residue, metal canned products, or mild steel or cast iron cookware to remain on stainless steel surfaces for long periods of time. This can result in damage to the surface, such as staining or corrosion.
- Never cut directly on a stainless steel surface.
- Never set hot pans directly on a stainless steel surface.
- Avoid scouring a stainless steel surface across the satin finish lines. Scouring across the satin finish lines can damage the original stainless steel grain finish. Never use an abrasive scouring pad such as 3M pad. (There is a new type of scouring pad that is safe for stainless steel.)
- Don't allow liquid soap or other household cleansers to dry on the stainless steel surface. Most brands contain chemical additives, which will affect the finish.

- Never leave solutions of chlorine bleach and water on your stainless steel surface for extended periods of time. Chlorides, which are found in most soaps, detergents, bleaches, and cleansers, are very aggressive to stainless steel. If left on too long they can cause surface pitting.
- Don't use a steel wool pad to clean your stainless steel. Steel wool pads have a tendency to break apart and small particles of steel can become embedded in the surface of the appliance. The steel particles will rust and will give the appearance that the stainless steel itself is rusting.
- Never leave wet sponges, cloths, or cleaning pads on the stainless steel surface. This can lead to surface rust.

Things to Do

- Rinse or clean surface after use. Clean with warm, soapy water. For heavier clean up use a safe, non-abrasive sponge.
- Avoid caustic chemicals. Avoid exposing your appliance to strong chemicals, such as paint removers, oven cleaners, etc. If contact occurs, quickly flush the surface with water.
- Remove excess moisture. Towel dry after each use to prevent mineral deposits from building up on the surface of your appliance.
- Follow the grain. When cleaning the exterior stainless steel surface of your grill or outdoor kitchen appliance, be sure to rub in the direction of the grain finish lines.

*These guidelines were initially adapted from "The Care and Cleaning of Stainless Steel" by The Specialty Steel Industry of North America (SSINA) by Restore It Yourself, Inc.