

Good Dutch oven breads seem to be a rarity. However, marvelous corn breads, biscuits, rolls, and sourdough loaves are surprisingly easy to perfect in the old black pot. The larger the oven the better when it comes to cooking breads. A 14-inch oven serves nicely to produce three loaves of bread or up to three dozen rolls or biscuits. To successfully brown breads, however, you must alter the cooking process for the last five to eight minutes of the traditional 25–30 minute, 350° baking time.

First, put a light coat of oil on the interior of a cool oven (including the lid), and let the rolls or bread complete their final rise in the oven prior to applying the coals.

Second, place the oven on the coals with the proper number of coals on top as noted below. (Remember: no coals directly under the center of the oven.)

Third, when there are five to eight minutes left in the cooking time, lift the lid, lightly brush the tops of the breads with butter, replace the lid, then take all the coals from under the oven and distribute them evenly on the top.

With all the heat now on the lid, check the bread every couple of minutes until you think it looks perfect. After brushing the coals and ashes from the lid, remove it, tilt the oven over a bread board, and your perfect bread will gently fall out.

- 2 coals per inch of oven diameter
- place 2 more coals than the oven size on the lid, and
- place 2 less than the oven size under it.