The Coal Chart

From **Clay's Cow Camp Kitchen**. Stick this on the shop wall. Read across from your oven and down from your heat. Bold is on the lid, the other number is under. Charcoal briquettes, lit till they go gray.

Oven	325°F	350°F	375°F	400°F	425°F	450°F
8-inch	**10** / 5	**11** / 5	**11** / 6	**12** / 6	**13** / 6	**14** / 6
10-inch	**13** / 6	**14** / 7	**16** / 7	**17** / 8	**18** / 9	**19** / 10
12-inch	**16** / 7	**17** / 8	**18** / 9	**19** / 10	**21** / 10	**22** / 11
14-inch	**20** / 10	**21** / 11	**22** / 12	**24** / 12	**25** / 13	**26** / 14

Counts from Lodge Cast Iron's published coal chart.

Four ways to cook

Bake: use the chart.
Roast: same total, split even top and bottom.
Simmer: all under, lid bare. 8, 10, 12 or 14 coals for those oven sizes.
Hard heat, frying, boiling: all under. 16, 21, 25 or 32 coals.

The simmer and hard-heat numbers are my starting points. Yours may run different.

Six rules

- Light coals 15 to 20 minutes ahead.
- Under the oven: a ring, half an inch inside the edge.
- On the lid: a checkerboard. Never bunch them.
- Every 10 to 15 minutes turn the oven a quarter one way and the lid a quarter the other.
- Fresh coals about every 45 minutes on a long cook.
- Above 3,000 feet add about 25°F and more time.

FOOD SAFETY AND FIRE

Use a thermometer: whole cuts of beef and pork 145°F with a 3-minute rest, ground meat 160°F, all poultry 165°F. Never burn charcoal inside a home, tent, camper or garage. It gives off carbon monoxide even when it looks dead.

Cards for the Chuck Box

Print on heavy paper, cut on the dashes and keep one in the lid of your oven. These are the first four rows of heat, the ones you will use most.

COAL COUNT: LID / UNDER

	325°	350°	375°	400°
8"	10/5	11/5	11/6	12/6
10"	13/6	14/7	16/7	17/8
12"	16/7	17/8	18/9	19/10
14"	20/10	21/11	22/12	24/12

Simmer: all under (size in coals). Hard heat: 16, 21, 25, 32 under. Roast: same total, split even. Turn every 10 to 15 minutes.

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The rest of the recipes, with the coals counted on each one, are in **The Wagon Cook's Book**.