

Keeping Copper Cookware Bright

Uncoated copper oxidizes and quickly tarnishes, so if you want to keep that warm bright glow, on copper cookware, some degree of care is required.

Wash pots and pans with soap and warm water, rinse and use a soft cloth to dry right away; moisture makes copper tarnish faster. Never use abrasive cleansers or steel wool, because copper is a soft metal and they will scratch the surface. Washing in a dishwasher is not advised, as harsh detergents will darken copper.

- To remove tarnish, use a commercial polish or make your own. Several “home” remedies are recommended:
- Make a paste from equal parts salt, vinegar and flour. Rub the copper with this mixture (as with any polish, a circular motion is recommended) then wash the pot carefully, rinse thoroughly and dry.
- Dip half a lemon in kosher salt — (which has large, coarse granules), then use the lemon to rub the copper surface. When the tarnish disappears, use a soft cloth to polish the copper with beeswax for a lasting shine.
- Boil copper utensils for several hours in a pot of water containing one tablespoon of salt and one cup of white vinegar. Afterward, wash the items with soap in hot water, rinse and dry.
- If copper is tarnished, boil article in a pot of water with 1 tablespoon salt and 1 cup white vinegar for several hours.

Wash with soap in hot water. Rinse and dry.

To keep tarnish at bay, spray with a brightening product (commercial copper or brass polish), dust occasionally and wipe the utensil down with a cold, damp cloth.

Of course, you may prefer the “rustic” look of careworn, tarnished copper. Many cooks and homeowners allow their copper pots or ornaments to darken naturally and develop a green patina that adds an authentic “country” touch to a kitchen.

Additional copper cleaning recommendations can be found at:

www.copper.org, www.doityourself.com, ask.yahoo.com and www.howstuffworks.com.