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Instruction manual for PURI domestic tandoori clay ovens

Company registered as
The Tandoor Clay Oven Limited in
UK & Canada



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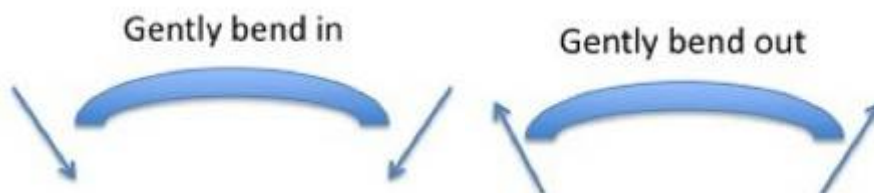
1. Unpacking your PURI tandoori clay oven

When your Tandoor is delivered you will of course need to unpack it. The Tandoors are quite heavy (SS1/MS1 model approx. 55 kg and the SS2 model approx. 78 kg with the packing) and we do not recommend lifting them directly out through the top of the crate. However to inspect the clay liner for damages which may occur in transit please open the wooden box from top only and inspect the clay liner while the tandoor is still in the box. **Please be advised that hairline / minor cracks and fissures are normal for any clay oven and should not be considered as a damaged clay oven.** Now coming on how to get it out of the wooden box , never tip the crate over and slide the Tandoor out sideways. Instead, simply carefully deconstruct the crate around the Tandoor. The Tandoor can then be moved on its castor wheels.

The handles on the side of the Tandoor are to assist with moving it on the castors and are not designed to take the weight of the Tandoor if it is being lifted. If the oven must be lifted always do so with the assistance of two people providing support from the underside of the oven.

Check your Tandoor and accessories to ensure they have arrived safely and contact us on the day of delivery by 7 pm if you believe there may be a problem.

If necessary, you may need to adjust the side vent door so that it slides smoothly. If the vent door is hard to slide up and down, then you will simply need to slightly increase the curve in the door piece (bend in) gently using your hands so that it grabs less onto the side running tracks (see Schematic 1 below). If the vent door slides up and down too freely, then you will simply need to slightly flatten the curve in the door piece (bend out) gently by putting it on the floor and stepping on it so that it grabs more onto the side running tracks (see Schematic 2 below).



Schematic 1

Schematic 2



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2. The First Burn

Before using your tandoor always ensure that it is positioned on flat surface. When using your tandoor for the first time we recommend that you warm up the inner clay liner slowly. This “first burn” is a one off procedure and is conducted by placing approximately 2 hands full of charcoal onto the base of the tandoor and lighting. The fire is allowed to burn out completely with the oven lid fully off and the side vent door fully open/removed.

Do not use fire briquettes during the first burn and for the first 3 sessions of tandoor

Next time you use your Tandoor you can start with a larger fire and it will only take 30-40 minutes to come up to cooking temperature. No cooking is to be done the first time; this will insure the longevity of the clay oven. To prepare the walls of your Tandoor for cooking naan or roti bread, after the first burn perform the following procedure:

Allow the Tandoor to completely cool naturally (never use water to extinguish the fire or cool the Tandoor. Mix approx. 500gms of table salt into 1 litre of luke warm water and wet a sponge or cloth with the salt solution. Squeeze the excess salt solution from the sponge/cloth and gently wipe the damp sponge/cloth over the wall of the Tandoor. Rinse the sponge/cloth in the salt solution and repeat until the wall has been fully wiped over. Do not wet the clay liner too much. Allow the Tandoor to dry. After the Tandoor has been fired for a total of 6 to 8 hours or 3 tandoori sessions after 1st burn you will be ready to start cooking naan and roti bread, in the first 3 tandoori sessions you can make stuff on the skewers and the bbq grill.

This salt solution wipe will assist with the naan and roti bread sticking to the Tandoor wall. The process can be repeated every now and then as in addition to assisting with naan/roti sticking, it also assists with removing soot that can develop over time on the Tandoor walls

3. Using the tandoor after a long time especially after the winters

The first burn procedure needs to be repeated if you have not used the tandoor for more than 3 months as the clay tends to absorb moisture from the air. It is very important to get rid of the excess moisture in the clay before exposing it to high heat straight away, this ensure longevity of the clay oven



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The “first burn” - small charcoal fire maintained till it douses off on its own, leave it to burn overnight

4.Type of fuel to use in your Tandoor

Lump wood charcoal or Charcoal Briquettes/Heat Beads are to be burned in the Tandoor. You can also use wood but make sure to use only small pieces of wood which are almost the same size as charcoal Firelighters or BBQ gel can be used to assist with starting the fire. See pictures of these below.

Please note that the Charcoal Briquettes or Heat Beads are not to be used for the first 3-4 times of doing the tandoori session as they emit more heat and can cause the major cracking in the clay oven, they can be used once the clay oven has been fully seasoned after 3-4 times of tandoori sessions. Ideally the clay walls turn red after 3-4 sessions, if the clay walls are still black that means you have not fired the tandoor enough, put some more charcoal than what you have used so far in previous sessions and give the tandoor a good fire , you may use briquettes after 3-4 times of use and they will make the clay walls go red

After “first burn”, you can start off by placing about 1.5 to 2 kg for the SS1 models, or about 2.5 to 3.0 kg for the SS2 models, of lump wood charcoal in a pyramid shape around a fire lighter. Leave the vent door completely open & lid open during the first 40 minutes and then you can close the vent door and put the lid on partially after you put the skewers

The oven will then consume about 1 kg of additional fuel per hour, which can be added in portions after the initial batch of fuel starts to lose heat (typically about 1.5-2 hours after lighting the oven). If fuel is added while cooking food, try to add it gradually to avoid large flames developing which may burn your food.



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We at PURI's have tested many different grades of charcoal and highly recommend to use Restaurant grade which you can buy from our web site www.PuriTandoors.co.uk. You can enjoy best cooking experience in a tandoori oven when using right charcoal where consistent high quality heat, subtle barbecued taste and ease of use are most important. It's an incredible cooking charcoal known for its clean cooking experience with longer heat duration

DO NOT use any form of accelerant such as petrol to start the fire as this may cause an explosion. Never extinguish the fire with water as this will cause the clay liner to catastrophically crack. After use, the tandoor should be allowed to cool naturally. You may place the lid on the Tandoor and shut the side vent door to assist with extinguishing the fire.

Do not use instant or self-ignite charcoal as that does not generate enough heat and douses quickly. You may use 500 gms of self-ignite charcoal & mix it with at least 2 kgs of lump wood charcoal or briquettes to get the charcoal fire going.



Fire lighters



Lump wood charcoal



Briquettes



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5. Tandoor oven temperature

As with all types of cooking, the temperature at which you cook food in the Tandoor is very important. It won't take long for you to estimate the temperature of the oven to cook food perfectly every time. To help get you started, you might like to use a Laser Temperature Gun (see pictures below).



Laser Temperature Gun (Not Included, can be bought from Amazon for less than £10/ \$20) is the best way to measure the temperature of the tandoor, just point it towards the clay walls to know the correct temperature)

Most food will be cooked in the Tandoor at temperatures ranging from about 250 Degrees Celsius to about 300 degrees Celsius. It is important to note that as the bulk mass of a given piece of meat being cooked in the Tandoor increases, the cooking temperature used should decrease. For example, skewered pieces of chicken thigh fillet, as in traditional tandoori chicken, can (and should) be cooked quite quickly (about 8-12 minutes depending on size) at a relatively high temperature (e.g. 260-300 degrees Celsius). In that case the chicken can be in small enough pieces to cook through and develop a crispy charred outer skin without burning at the higher temperatures. In contrast, a whole chicken or leg of lamb, for example, should not be cooked at such high temperatures. These larger cuts of meat should be cooked more slowly (about 30-45 minutes, depending on size) at lower temperatures of about 200-240°C. The optimum temperature for cooking naan bread is typically about 250-270 Degrees Celsius depending upon the recipe used.

The temperature of the Tandoor can be adjusted by opening or closing the side vent door, optionally in conjunction with partially or fully removing the lid of the Tandoor.

The vent door and the lid is supposed to be left completely open/ removed till the charcoal reaches the ember stage and then while cooking you need to close vent door partially or completely and put the lid on depending on how hot the tandoor gets

The vent door is supposed to be used like a thermostat, open it you want the temperature to go up and close it when the tandoor gets too hot and the meat on the skewers or the naan breads are getting burnt. The amount of fuel used will of course also affect the temperature in the oven. About 1.5 to 2 kg for the SS1 models or about 2.5 to 3 kg for the SS2 models, of charcoal or heat beads will



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generally be used to cook an average meal. The tandoor will typically be ready for cooking food about 30-40 minutes after the fire has been lit. As a general rule, the Tandoor will be ready to use when the fuel has turned into embers (see pictures below).

For extended period of cooking you can introduce about 1 kg of additional fuel per hour, which you can add in portions after the initial batch of fuel starts to lose heat (typically about 1.5-2 hours after lighting the oven). If fuel is added while cooking food, try to add it gradually to avoid flames developing which may burn your food.



5 mins of lighting the charcoal



Flames still present after 15-20 minutes



**After 30-40 minutes no flames only embers.
Tandoor is now ready to cook**





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Charcoal briquettes / Heat beads added to charcoal embers to minimise flames during cooking (optional)

6. Using the skewers with your Tandoor

The SS1 and SS2 Deluxe Tandoor models each come with 8 stainless steel skewers having turned wooden handles. The SS1 and SS2 ultima Tandoor models each come with an extra 2 skewers making for a total of 10. All models also come with two naan rods. The skewers enable the unique option to cook food vertically in the oven. As noted for grill cooking, when using the skewers you also get the advantage of cooking at much hotter temperature in the Tandoor compared with a conventional oven or BBQ, and the food is cooked over a bed of charcoal. Cooking food over charcoal provides for that great char-grilled flavour.

Use of the skewers is quite straight forward. Simply slide what you want to cook up the rod leaving a gap at the top (about 10-15 cm - so that the food does not poke out the top of the Tandoor) and bottom (about 15-20 cm - so that the food is not too close to the coals).

As a guide only, you can easily fit 5-6 chicken drum sticks on an SS2 model skewer (72 cm long) and 3-4 chicken drum sticks on an SS1 model skewer (65 cm long).

Provided you can get the food to stay on the skewers, there is no limitation on the type of food you can cook, meat, fish, vegetables etc.

A useful tip to prevent the food closest to the coals from charring to quickly is to use a heat shield such as a piece of potato (see pictures below) or aluminium foil.

Don't be afraid to use more than 1 skewer to secure your food. For example, see in the picture below where a double skewer technique has been used to secure an American style rack of marinated pork ribs.

When cooking with the skewers you will generally put the lid on so that it is adjacent the protruding skewers to help maintain the temperature in the oven and also allow cooking smoke out (see picture below). If the Tandoor is too hot, just take the lid off for a while.

The skewers will be much easier to clean when they are still warm.

A great advantage of Tandoor cooking is that your food is cooked without lying in any fat whatsoever!



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2 skewers being used to secure pork ribs ready for cooking



Skewered pieces of chicken on the bone with potato pieces for heat shields ready for cooking



Tandoori chicken cooking in Tandoor with potato pieces acting as heat shields



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Skewered pieces of char-grilled chicken on the bone cooked in the Tandoor



Lamb/ Mutton Seekh kebabs cooking in the Tandoor with potato pieces acting as heat shields





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7.Using the grill with your Tandoor

You will never miss your conventional bbq with our bbq grill

The SS1 and SS2 Deluxe and Ultima models each come with a stainless steel grill that neatly fits inside the Tandoor. The grill enables you to cook food horizontally in the oven, pretty much like an ordinary oven. However, unlike an ordinary oven or BBQ, your Tandoor can get much hotter and the food is cooked over a bed of charcoal. Cooking food over charcoal provides for that great char-grilled flavour.

Use the grill to cook larger pieces of meat like a whole chicken, rib eye fillet, leg of lamb etc.

We recommend preheating the Tandoor for at least 40 minutes before you are ready to start cooking.

You can place the grill in the oven and take it out using the back end of the naan rods provided. Simply use the "U" end of each naan rod to grab the lugs on the grill to assist with lowering it into the oven or raising it out of the oven (see picture below).

You may wish to place the meat on the grill before lowering it into the Tandoor. However, the base of the Tandoor will contain hot coals and the grill legs will need to push through them to rest on the fire cement base - so be careful to balance the meat on the grill as the grill legs work their way through the coals. Alternatively, lower the grill in the oven and then place the meat onto the grill. You can of course light the fire with the grill already in place.

When cooking with the grill you will generally put the lid on about 3/4 the way over the opening to help contain the temperature in the oven and allow the cooking smoke out. If the Tandoor is too hot, just take the lid off for a while.

A great advantage of Tandoor cooking is that your food is cooked without lying in any fat whatsoever!



Stainless steel bbq grill being lowered into Tandoor using "U" ends of the naan rods



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BBQ grill positioned in the tandoor



A rib eye fillet & whole chicken cooking on grill in Tandoor



A turkey breast roll & racks of pork cooking on grill in PURI Tandoor



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8. Tandoor Cleaning

Always let the Tandoor cool off naturally in a dry place (never use water to extinguish the fire or cool the Tandoor). When cool, sweep out the ashes inside oven via the side ventilation door using a small dust broom or even an old paint brush. Be CAREFUL there are no coals still in the ash when you wipe out the Tandoor. The Tandoor is insulated very well and coals can remain in the ash for as long as 24 hours after you have finished cooking!

The inner clay liner may need an occasional clean every 4-5 times you use the Tandoor. However, NEVER apply a commercial cleaning product to the liner. The clay surface is used to cook naan, and you do not want to apply chemicals to it. If the liner does need to be cleaned, for example to remove soot build up, simply wipe it over quickly once or twice with a cloth that has been lightly dampened with a salt/water solution. To do this, mix 1 tablespoon of salt into 1 litre of luke warm water and wet a sponge or cloth with the salt solution. Squeeze the excess salt solution from the sponge/cloth and gently wipe the damp sponge/cloth over the wall of the Tandoor. Rinse the sponge/cloth in the salt solution and repeat until the wall has been fully wiped over. Do not wet the clay liner too much. Allow the Tandoor to dry. NEVER do this when the clay liner is hot!

The stainless steel components of the Tandoor can be cleaned with warm soapy water or conventional stainless steel and oven cleaners as directed. Be careful not to use abrasive cleaners as they will damage the polished finish. As some cleaners can be corrosive, be sure to remove any residues of the cleaner with a damp cloth to prevent damage (rusting) of the steel.

With time, the Tandoor will gather cooking residues around the opening and on the lid and skewers (see picture below of the Tandoor mouth). These can be cleaned as outlined above. We recommend cleaning such cooking residues after each use of the Tandoor to facilitate the ease of cleaning and to also maintain the polished finish of the Tandoor. You may not wish to clean the underside of the Tandoor lid.

Stainless steel sections of your tandoor that get hot (e.g the lid) may also develop a pale yellow colour that does not come off with standard cleaning agents. You can revive the silver finish of the stainless steel simply by wiping the affected regions with solution made from 1 part white vinegar and 1 part salt (by volume). No scrubbing is need - just apply gently, leave for a few minutes then wipe clean with a fresh damp cloth (remove all residues as this is an acidic solution that can promote rust of the stainless steel). You will be amazed how effective this cleaning solution is! See a picture of a heat yellowed piece of stainless steel where only half of it (the right side) has been treated. Cooking residues built up at mouth of Tandoor



Mouth of Tandoor with cooking residues , cleaned with stainless steel cleaning solution



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9. Tandoor safety

When your Tandoor is delivered you will of course need to unpack it. The Tandoors are quite heavy (SS1 model 40 kg and the SS2 model 60kg) and we do not recommend lifting them directly out through the top of the crate. Never tip the crate over and slide the Tandoor out sideways. Instead, simply carefully deconstruct the crate around the Tandoor. The Tandoor can then be moved on its castor wheels.

The handles on the side of the Tandoor are to assist with moving it on the castors and are not designed to take the weight of the Tandoor if it is being lifted. If the Tandoor has to be lifted, always use at least 2 people and grip the Tandoor from underneath.

The outside body of the Tandoor does get hot and the skewers are sharp so position them away from children and pets. Be mindful that burning coals can spill out of the side ventilation door if it is left open. Although coals are unlikely fall out through the side vent door, we nevertheless do not recommend leaving the vent door open more than about 1 cm when using the Tandoor.

Always let the Tandoor cool off naturally in a dry place. When cool, sweep out the ashes inside oven via the side ventilation door using a small dust broom or even an old paint brush. Be CAREFUL there are no coals still in the ash when you wipe out the Tandoor. The Tandoor is insulated very well and hot coals can remain in the ash for as long as 24 hours after you have finished cooking!

If the lid is placed on the oven when the tandoor is in use, it will get very hot so always use gloves to pick it up.

As with all open fires, always have sand or a fire extinguisher on hand in case of an emergency.

*Never move your Tandoor whilst lit.
Our Tandoors are for outdoor use only*



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10. Care & Maintenance of your Tandoor

Your Tandoor has a hand crafted inner clay liner. The clay used to make the liner is of premium quality sourced from a select location in Northern India. The clay is hand crafted into the liner by master craftsmen using century old techniques. The clay is reinforced with natural fibres to form a durable composite structure. Kept with a little care, your Tandoor will last for more than a decade.

However, as with all clay products the inner clay liner can break if it is mishandled. When moving the Tandoor on the castors make sure it is on an even surface. Large jolts when moving the Tandoor may cause the clay liner to break. Never drop the Tandoor from any height or roll it on its side as this may cause the clay liner to break.

The Tandoor also has a fire cement base.

As the inner clay liner and fire cement base are subjected to high temperatures when the Tandoor is being used they can develop heat induced cracks over time. These cracks are normal, particularly in the fire cement base, and will not affect the operation of the Tandoor (see picture below of the inside a well used Tandoor).

The heat induced cracks can develop even if the Tandoor has not been dropped or mishandled, they are simply due to expansion and contraction effects resulting from the clay/cement being heated and cooled.

There is no need to fill any cracks that develop in the fire cement base everytime , you can repair these cracks once a year using fire cement & a spatula or just lay another layer of fire cement on top of the existing fire cement base. The complete name of the fire cement is refractory air set fire cement

Repairing Cracks in clay Liner : Should a large crack (e.g. more than about 3-4mm wide) develop in the clay liner, you can use the refractory air set fire cement to fill the crack (the oven will still work fine without filling the crack). If the crack is filled, allow the cement to air cure for a day or so, then use the Tandoor as normal. Here is youtube link which shows how to repair cracks in your tandoor

<https://youtu.be/RSdVR58RdyE>

The inner clay liner or fire cement base of the Tandoor should never be exposed directly to liquids (e.g. water) when hot. Never try to extinguish the fire or cool the Tandoor by dowsing it with water. Such action will lead to catastrophic cracking of the inner clay liner and/or fire cement base. The Tandoor should also never be left out uncovered in the rain at any time. Our Deluxe and Ultima Tandoors come with a weatherproof cover for protection against the elements. The Tandoor lid (when in place) will also to some extent protect the inner clay liner oven from rain. However, we recommend storing the Tandoor undercover to prevent it from getting wet. When the Tandoor is not being used, always place the lid on the Tandoor and close the side ventilation door.

Heat cracks can develop in the liner and/or in the base - these are normal and will not affect operation of the Tandoor