

# How to Put Out a Grease Fire

A fire needs 3 things to burn. They are **Heat, Oxygen, and Fuel**. A fire will keep growing until one of those is removed.

Cooking doesn't normally present a lot of danger. You might nick your finger while chopping vegetables or manage to burn a pan of roasting potatoes, but in terms of actual danger to ourselves or our homes, not so much. Except for grease fires. Do you know what to do if your cooking oil catches fire?

A grease fire happens when your cooking oil becomes too hot. When heating, oils first start to boil, then they'll start smoking, and *then* they'll catch on fire. Most vegetable oils have a smoking point around 450°F, while animal fats like lard or goose fat will start smoking around 375°F.

The very best safety is prevention. Whenever you're heating oil for pan-frying or deep-fat frying, stay in the kitchen. Use a heavy pot with a lid and clip a thermometer to the side so you know the temperature of the oil.

Keep an eye on the oil as it's heating. If you see wisps of smoke or smell something acrid, immediately turn down the heat or remove the pot from the burner completely. The oil won't immediately catch fire once it starts smoking, but smoke is a danger sign that it's well on its way to getting there.

**If the worst happens and your oil does catch on fire, do the following:**

- **Turn the Heat Off** - Don't try to move the pot. You might accidentally splash yourself or your kitchen with burning oil. And that would be bad.
- **Cover the Pot with a Metal Lid** - Fire cannot exist in the absence of oxygen. With the lid on (and the heat off), the fire should quickly consume all the oxygen and put itself out. Use a metal lid since glass will shatter.
- **Pour on Baking Soda** - Baking soda will extinguish grease fires, but only if they're small. It takes *a lot* of baking soda to do the job.
- **Spray the Pot with a Class B Dry Chemical Fire Extinguisher** - This is your last resort, as fire extinguishers will contaminate your kitchen. Still, it's better than the alternative if the fire is getting out of control.
- **Get Out and Call 911** - If the fire does break out of control, don't try to be a hero. Get out and find a phone to call 911.

## The safest way to put out a grease fire burning in a pan...

### Remove the oxygen.

Here's how...

Put on Oven Mitts to protect your hands.

Get the lid that fits the pan and '*slide*' it across the top of the pan to smother the flames.  
Or, use a cookie sheet and '*slide*' it over the top of the burning pan.

Shut off the burner to stop adding heat.

Leave the pan alone, don't move it, and don't remove the lid until it has cooled completely.

### Other ways to put out grease fires...

Use a class B or BC or ABC fire extinguisher.

A Fire Extinguisher will release a-lot of pressure, so start at a distance away and move towards the fire, rather than up-close spraying directly on to the burning grease which could tip the pan and spread the fire.

You could also...Carefully pour a good amount of baking soda onto the grease fire.

Or...Soak a towel under the faucet, wring out the excess dripping water, and drape over the burning grease pan to smother it. (This is very effective, quick and easy!)

### Things **NOT TO DO** with a grease fire

**DO NOT Move the Pot or Carry It Outside** - Throwing the pot outside might seem logical in the frenzy of the moment. But trying to move the pot might splash burning oil on you, your home, and anything around you.

**DO NOT** douse the grease fire with water, or milk, etc...If you do, **it will explode into a fireball**. Pouring water can cause the oil to splash and spread the fire. The vaporizing water can also carry grease particles in it, also spreading the fire.

**DO NOT Throw Any Other Baking Product on the Fire** - Flour might look like baking soda, flour is combustible and it won't react the same as baking soda. Only baking soda can help put out a grease fire.

