

## Make a Cook Pot from a Can

Simple inexpensive cook pots can easily be made from empty tinned cans. Putting a little extra care into their construction can make them even more effective. For an adequate sized personal cook pot, use a 28-29 oz. can. These cans are about 4 in / 10 cm across by 4½ in / 11cm tall, and they typically come with fruit, applesauce, tomatoes, or pumpkin in them. Beans also come in this size can, but these cans usually have a white epoxy coating inside which doesn't burn out, and may put some unwanted chemicals into your food. So I don't advise using any cans with this white coating inside. Unfortunately, this size can holds a little less than a quart, or liter, which makes it slightly inefficient when boiling and purify water. However larger cans are either too deep, and therefore awkward to cook with and eat out of, hard to find, or too large for personal use.

### Materials & Tools:

- Can —28-29 oz
- Wire —14-12 gauge wire, about 10 in / 25 cm
- Awl, Ice Pick, or large Nail
- Hammer —A light-weight ball-peen hammer would probably be best, but just about any hammer would work, even an appropriately size smooth stone
- Pliers
- File

(1) Empty and clean the can. Be sure any sharp edges left over from opening the can are bent down smoothed. This can easily and effectively be done by placing the edge of the can with the sharp area against a hard surface down, and lightly tapping the sharp spot with the hammer.

(2) Locate the 'seam' of the can. This is usually a dark line running up one side of the can. About 90 around from the seam, make a hole just below the upper rim of the can with an awl, ice pick, or large nail. Place the can against a block of scrap wood and punch the hole from the inside of the can to the outside, as close to the top of the can as possible. Punching the hole lower will give you less capacity. Be careful not to cut yourself on the sharp jagged edges around the newly made hole. By punching the hole from the inside to the outside, you minimize the risk of cutting yourself on these edges while cooking, eating, or cleaning the cook pot. Bend these sharp jagged edges down against the can by re-inserting the tool you used to make the hole from the outside of the can. Bend the tool over to one side, and rotate it around the edge of the hole in a flat arc to bend these jagged edges out and away from the hole. Then place the can on the horn of an anvil, over a piece of pipe, or slip a large smooth round rock that 'just fits' inside the can, and hold it up against the inside of the hole. Tap the jagged edges down flat with a hammer or another rounded stone.

(3) Measure, or sight across the top of the can to determine the spot on the rim exactly opposite the first hole, and make another hole on the opposite side of the can and tap down the jagged edges the same way.

(4) Cut a piece of the heavy wire, (12 or 14 gauge), about 10 in. / 25 cm. long for a 'bail' or handle. File or grind smooth any sharpness off the ends of the wire. Bend the wire

around the bottom of the can so that it has a curvature that is about the same as the curvature of the can.

(5) Grab one end of the wire with a pair of pliers. Press your thumb up against the wire right next to the pliers, and bend the end of the wire 180 degrees into a sharp 'U' shape. This 'U' should be bent toward the inside of the curvature of the wire, and in line with it. Grab the other end of the wire in the same way but only bend it only about 100 degrees into a tight 'L' shape. The 'L' should also be bent toward the inside of the curvature, and in line with it. Twist the wire at the 'U' and/or the 'L' if necessary so that they are both in line with the over-all curvature of the wire.



(6) Insert the 'U' end of the wire into one of the holes on the can from outside to inside. Then insert the 'L' into the hole on the other side of the can, also from outside to inside. Close the 'L' into a 'U' with the pliers. Leave both 'U's open so the bail can fold down against the side of the pot. If the 'U's are closed, the bail will stay more or less upright. This may be handy when cooking, but it will take up extra room in your pack, and greatly increase the risk of the bail getting bent out of shape.

(7) If at all possible, place the cook pot over a fire to burn off any coating that might be inside the can. Do this outdoors. Then thoroughly scrub the pot and dry it. As soon as the pot is dry, give it a light coat of vegetable oil. Heat the oiled pot again to 'bake' the oil on the can, 'seasoning' it, much as you would season cast iron cookware to help keep it from rusting.

(8) Cooking on an open fire will make any pot sticky and black on the outside. This black sticky stuff will come off on just about anything it touches—which can make a real mess in your pack. If you sew, make a bag from some light weight material to keep your cook pot in, otherwise use a piece of cloth to wrap the pot in. Fold this bag or cloth a couple times to make a handy hot pad while cooking.

