



## What is Aluminium?

To most people, aluminium is a light, silvery metal used to make a variety of products from airplanes and automobiles to pots and pans and baseball bats. However, it is much more than that. It is a chemical element - one of 90 naturally occurring elements on earth that serve as

building blocks in nature. As an element, aluminium has unique physical and chemical properties. It is the 3rd most abundant element in nature, representing about 8% of the earth's crust, or surface. Only oxygen and silicon are found in greater quantities. Aluminium is everywhere, it is present in soils and clays, minerals and rocks and even in water- but not as a metal. That is because aluminium is a very chemically active element. Because of its chemical activity and particularly its affinity for oxygen, Aluminium is not found in its free or metallic state in nature. Instead, Aluminium is always found chemically combined with other elements, particularly oxygen.

### Aluminium Cookware Facts

- Aluminium contributes to more than half the cookware sold each year. Since long, consumers, professional chefs and commercial food processors have welcomed its advantage for food preparation.
- Aluminium is light and strong – even a large sturdy pan is easy to handle. It imparts no taste or odour to food, is durable and, best of all, it has excellent cooking characteristics.
- Aluminium loses only about 7% of the heat it receives, leaving 93% of the heat to cook your food. Aluminium cookware transfers heat very efficiently and evenly to the food. Gram for gram, Aluminium conducts heat almost twice as well as copper and about nine times than stainless steel.
- Electrolytic reduction, invented in 1886, brought Aluminium within reach of the average consumer and its first large volume use – the tea kettle – began in 1889.

- History tells us that the first Aluminium frying pan in the United States was stamped from the sheet metal in 1890.
- Most of the Aluminium produced before 1900 was used to make cooking utensils. By 1914, automobiles became the largest Aluminium market, but cookware still claim a sizeable percentage of all Aluminium produced.
- Aluminium is used not only in family kitchens, but also for vats, tanks and vessels used in making wine, brewing, preserving fruits and other food processing.
- Napoleon III reportedly served his most honoured guests at state banquets with plates made of Aluminium, then a rare and precious metal. Less important guests had to eat from plates of pure gold.
- With proper care, Aluminium can last a lifetime. Exposed Aluminium surfaces will not rust, but get scratched by sharp tools. They should be cleaned with non-abrasive pads and cleaners. Extreme, rapid temperature changes can damage cookware. Utensils should be allowed to cool before washing. Acid or salty residues should be washed off soon after cooking and immediate drying helps preserve appearance.

Aluminium cookware is shaped from sheet metal or cast from molten metal. Aluminium utensils come in various thickness or "gauges" identified by unique number. The smaller the number, the thicker the aluminium, for example, 8 gauge aluminium is 0.129 inch thick, almost four times thicker than 20 gauge aluminium.