



Drying Jerky¹

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Jerky is a staple in the packs of today's outdoorsmen: backpackers, skiers, and campers. It's a popular snack for armchair sportsmen, too.

Jerky can be made from almost any lean meat, including beef, pork or venison. If made from pork the meat must be treated to kill the trichinella parasite before it is sliced and marinated. This parasite could cause trichinosis. To treat the pork, freeze a portion that is 6 inches or less thick at 5°F or lower for 20 days. Poultry is not recommended for jerky, because of its texture when raw.

PREPARING THE MEAT

The first step in preparing the meat is to slice it into long, thin strips. Trim and discard all the fat from the meat, because it becomes rancid rapidly. Partially freezing the meat before cutting makes it easier to slice evenly. Slice with the grain into thin strips approximately ¼ inch thick; if a chewy jerky is desired. Slice across the grain for a more tender, brittle jerky. A tenderizer can also be used on the meat. Simply follow instructions on the package for tenderizing meats.

The meat is marinated for both flavor and tenderness. Ingredients for marinades include oil, salt and an acid product such as vinegar, lemon juice, teriyaki, soy sauce or wine.

JERKY MARINADE

- ¼ teaspoon each of pepper and garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon hickory smoke-flavored salt
- 1 ½-2 lbs. of lean meat (beef, pork, or venison)
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon worchestershire sauce

Combine all ingredients. Place strips of meat in a shallow pan and cover with marinade. Cover and refrigerate 1-2 hours or overnight.

DRYING THE MEAT

Remove meat strips from the marinade, drain on absorbent toweling and arrange on dehydrator trays or cake racks placed on baking sheets. Place the slices close together but do not overlap. Place the

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racks in a drying oven preheated at 140°F Dry until a test piece cracks but does not break when it is bent (10 to 24 hours). Pat off any beads of oil with absorbent toweling and cool. Remove strips from the racks. Cool. Package in glass jars or heavy plastic bags.

STORING THE JERKY

Properly dried jerky will keep at room temperature 1 to 2 months in a sealed container. However, to increase the shelf life and maintain the flavor, refrigerate or freeze the jerky.