



BEEF JERKY RECIPES

Meat Selection: Choose lean meats that are in excellent condition for making jerky. Highly marbled or fatty cuts of meat do not work well. Fat turns rancid very quickly and develops off-flavors during drying and storage.

Beef – Use lean cuts of beef. USDA select grade is leaner and less marbled than choice or prime grades. Chuck, flank, round, rump, and sirloin cuts work well.

Game meats – Most game meats can be used. Venison, elk, and antelope make excellent jerky. Because game meats tend to be quite lean, any cut can be used, but the best cuts tend to be the loin, round, and flank.

Poultry and Rabbit – The best cuts of poultry include the breast, thigh, and leg. For rabbit, the loin is good. Remove skin and fat before drying.

Fish – Choose non-oily fish for making jerky. Trout, tuna, and salmon make acceptable jerky.

Ground meat – Use ground meat that is at least 93% lean for making jerky.

Traditional Jerky

(This recipe works well, when heating the jerky after drying.)

¾ tsp salt
¼ tsp cracked pepper
1 Tbsp brown sugar
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 Tbsp soy sauce
1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
1 pound lean meat, thinly sliced

PRECOOKING OPTION #1:

Precooking the meat:

1. Dip meat in boiling marinade. This method shortens the drying time and makes a tender jerky. The color and texture of precooked jerky does not fully resemble traditional jerky, and ground meat jerky may break apart during boiling.
2. Soaking meat strips in a marinade before precooking is not recommended because the marinade will become a source of bacteria.
3. Putting unmarinated strips directly into the boiling marinade minimizes a cooked flavor and maintains the safety of the marinade.
4. Prepare 1 to 2 cups of a marinade of your choice in a saucepan. Bring the marinade to a boil over medium heat.
5. Add a few meat strips. Reheat to a simmer, stirring to thoroughly immerse each strip in the marinade.
6. Simmer strips for 1 ½ to 2 minutes (strips need to reach 160° F.)
7. Remove the pan from the heat. Working quickly and in small batches to prevent overcooking, use tongs to remove the strips from the hot marinade.

8. Repeat process until all the meat has been precooked, adding more marinade if needed.
9. Immediately start the drying process.

HOT PICKLE CURE

(This recipe was developed for precooking meat before drying. It is a two-step process that takes more than 24 hours.)

2 pounds lean meat strips

Step 1: Season and refrigerate the meat

- 1 ½ Tbsp salt
- 1 Tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp black pepper

Combine pickling spices – the salt, sugar, and black pepper. Place lean meat strips on a clean baking sheet. Evenly distribute half of the pickling spices over the meat, press the spices into the strips with a rubber mallet or meat tenderizer. Turn the strips and repeat on the opposite side. Cover and refrigerate the strips for 24 hours.

Step 2: Dip meat in simmering brine

- ¾ C salt
- ½ C sugar
- 2 Tbsp black pepper
- 1 quart water

Combine the salt, sugar, black pepper, and water in a large kettle. Stir to dissolve the salt and sugar and bring to a slow boil (175°F). Place a few meat strips at a time into a steamer basket and lower it into the brine. Simmer for 1 ½ to 2 minutes, stirring occasionally to make sure all the pieces are immersed. Using clean tongs, remove the meat strips and immediately start the drying process.

PRECOOKING OPTION #2:

Baking the meat.

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F.
2. Place seasoned meat strips close together on a baking sheet but not touching or overlapping.
3. Heat strips of beef, game meat, or rabbit until they reach an internal temperature of 160°F as measured with a thermometer. A thin-tipped thermometer is essential for measuring the temperature of baked meat strips.
4. Start the drying process immediately after baking.

VINEGAR SOAK

This method is not recommended for game meat as its effectiveness in killing *Trichinella* has not been studied.

VINEGAR MARINADE

Step 1: Soak meat in vinegar - 2 cups vinegar (at least 5% acidity)

Place the vinegar in a 9 x 13 inch glass, food-grade plastic, or stainless steel container. (Avoid using aluminum.) Add meat strips to the container, making sure the vinegar covers all the meat strips completely. Soak the meat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally to distribute the vinegar evenly around the strips. Drain the vinegar from the meat strips.

Step 2: Marinate and refrigerate the meat

Soy and Worcestershire sauces are critical for recipe, other ingredients can be altered.

¼ C soy sauce
1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
¼ tsp black pepper
¼ tsp garlic powder
¼ tsp onion powder
1 tsp salt or flavored salt

Combine all ingredients and place them in a 1-gallon, food-grade, resealable plastic bag. Add the vinegar-soaked meat strips to the marinade bag. Seal the bag and massage the pieces to thoroughly distribute the marinade over all the meat strips. Refrigerate the bag for 1 to 24 hours.

Remove the meat strips from the bag, and immediately start the drying process.

Source: A Pacific Northwest Extension Publication. University of Idaho, Oregon State University and Washington State University.