

Jerky, Old Fashioned Recipe from 'The Nitty-Gritty of Smoke-Cooking'

The mountain men that relied on jerky as an everyday food would never have thought that today jerky would bring over \$10.00 per pound in the grocery store. The long-lasting munchin' flavor of jerky is still as popular as it ever was. Whether it's on a fishing or hunting trip, skiing at the mountain, or watchin' a good TV show, we never seem to be able to get enough smoked jerky. You can't buy venison or buffalo meat, but it's easy to make mouth-waterin' beef jerky at home. The following is an excellent recipe for not only beef but elk, moose, bear, deer, etc.

There's one thing about jerky, the poorer the cut of meat, the better the jerky is. No matter what grade of meat you use, the taste will be the same, but the texture will be different. We've found that flank or round steak is dandy jerky meat.

To prepare jerky for smoking, it must be sliced with the grain, not against the grain, as meat is normally cut. Before beginning, make sure that the knife is very sharp. Trim off all fat! Fat will spoil, giving a rancid taste to the jerky. Slice the meat approximately one-half inch thick, four inches wide and six to 12 inches long. I've got my butcher talked into cutting mine on his meat slicer. You can partially freeze the meat and it is often easier to cut. Prepare the following brine for jerky...

Jerky Brine

For every two quarts of water:

1 cup curing salt

1/2 cup sugar

4 tablespoons black pepper

1 teaspoon liquid garlic - optional

Using a non-aluminum container, place strips of cut meat in brine solution so that they are completely submerged. If they appear crowded, repeat the above brine mixture. A plastic lid or dinner plate placed on the surface will aid in holding down the meat strips. Cure meat in brine in refrigerator for 8 to 10 hours.

When brining time has elapsed, remove meat strips and wash each piece thoroughly under cold running tap water. With paper or cloth towels, remove excess water and let air dry completely for 60 minutes. Once air drying process is complete, run in any seasoning of your choice. Some popular ones are onion salt, garlic salt and pepper. Place meat strips on Smokehouse jerky drying screens or directly on the grills and place in preheated smoker.

Smoke meat 9 to 12 hours, refilling the flavor pan with hickory chips every 2-1/2 hours. You'll know when jerky is done; it will become stiff like a twist of rope. For a quick check for doneness, break open a stick and check the center. Remove from the smoker and cool. Jerky should be kept refrigerated. Jerky sticks can be cut relatively easily by clipping with a pair of scissors. You can also make jerky from lamb brisket, and even turkey. Slice the turkey up, follow the above recipe and before ye know it..."TURKEY JERKY"!