



TIPSY FOODS
COOK A LITTLE TIPSY

Making Jerky

What Type of Jerky Do You Prefer

Do you like your jerky a bit chewy or more tender? For a chewier jerky slice with the grain and for a more brittle and tender jerky slice across the grain. Slicing with the grain may be a bit more of a chewing challenge but tends to allow for a longer and more satisfying chew. Slicing across the grain makes it easier to break apart with your teeth, but you may find these shorter pieces to be a bit less fulfilling.

The thickness of the meat strips also plays a part in ensuring the healthiest meat possible. Don't slice your meat any more than 1/4" thick and trim off as much fat as possible as it tends to shorten the shelf life of jerky by increasing the chances of it turning rancid sooner.

The Importance of the Freezer and the Fridge

It's recommended that the meat you use for making your jerky should have been frozen first as that helps to drastically reduce any potential bacteria growth in the meat. The USDA suggests that you thaw your meat in the refrigerator.

Experienced jerky makers have discovered that for best results for thinly slicing the deer steak it's best to have the meat still partially frozen as it makes it easier to slice.

Brining, Dry Curing or Marinating

The science part kicks in here and as long you're using enough salt (or something salty like Worcestershire or soy sauce) you're pretty much good to go no matter which method you choose. Now some people aren't fans of marinating meat in general since marinades only seem to get into the meat about 1/4" (the flavor from a marinade doesn't penetrate into the meat as deep as most would like) but it seems to really work for jerky since you're slicing these that thick anyway.

If you decide to marinate then you'll want to actually marinate your meat for much longer than you would other meats as the drying process tends to make the flavorful seasoning practically vanish, so you'll really want to hedge your bets here. For this reason I tend to suggest marinating your deer meat for 24-48 hours.

How to Make a Marinade

To make enough for 3 lbs of jerky use 2 tablespoons of Jerky Seasoning and 1/4 cup of soy sauce and 1/3 cup of Worcestershire sauce. There are approximately 2 tablespoons of seasoning in each ounce of Jerky Seasoning.



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How to Dry

You can dry your jerky by smoking it, using a dehydrator, confection oven or the oven in your kitchen. Your choice here comes down a bit more on the art side than the science side. Many of the hunters we know tend to believe that a dehydrator trumps a confection oven or the kitchen oven hands down. In their experience even on a low an oven overcooks the meat too much, leaving it a bit too crispy. Now if you prefer crispy then this might be more your style.

The USDA recommends drying using temperatures of a minimum of 160° to kill any harmful bacteria one of our local hunting customers who makes a lot of deer jerky prefers starting off at 160° for several hours but finishing off using temperatures more in the 145° to 155° range. He says that his total cook time using the dehydrator in this manner is 5-6 hours. You'll know the jerky is done when your test piece, while still a bit pliable, cracks a bit but doesn't break when it's bent.

Storing Your Jerky

You should always store jerky in the refrigerator so it lasts longer. You can keep your jerky in a paper bag or tightly sealed glass jar. It's not recommended that you use a plastic bag as these tend to lead to condensation and increases the likelihood of mold growth. Storing in the fridge usually provides a shelf life of 2-4 weeks. You can also store in the freezer for a very long time.

Insufficient drying or improper storage can also lead to the growth of mold.