



# Making Jerky Safely



## Important safety guidelines:

1. Wash hands often and thoroughly when handling meat, especially after handling raw meat. Hands should be in contact with warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
2. Do not cross-contaminate properly heated and dried meat with raw meat or unclean utensils. Keep raw meat, cutting surfaces, and equipment that has touched raw meat separate from dried meat, other ready-to-eat foods, and other work surfaces and equipment.
3. Sanitize cutting surfaces and equipment such as tongs, knives, and drying racks with a solution of 2 Tbsp. of chlorine bleach in one gallon of water. Sanitize before and after use.

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## **Recipe #1: Hot Pickle Cure Jerky\***

Use fresh lean meat free of fat and connective tissue. *Yield:* Five pounds of fresh meat should weigh approximately two pounds after drying or smoking.

1. Slice 5 pounds of meat (1/4-inch strips) with the grain, not crosswise. Spread out meat and sprinkle on 3 Tbsp. salt, 2 tsp. ground black pepper, and 2 Tbsp. sugar. Put the meat in a pan or dish and let stand for 24 hours in the refrigerator.
2. Pound the meat on both sides to work in the spice. *Optional:* Dip strips of meat in a liquid smoke solution (5 parts water to 1 part liquid smoke) for one to two seconds for added flavor.
3. Make a brine by dissolving 3/4 cup salt, 1/2 cup sugar, and 2 Tbsp. ground black pepper in a gallon of water. Stir to dissolve the salt and sugar.
4. Bring the brine to a low to medium boil. Immerse the fresh meat strips (a few at a time) into the boiling brine until they turn gray (approximately one to two minutes). Remove meat from brine, using clean tongs or other utensils that have not contacted raw meat.
5. Spread out meat on a clean dehydrator rack or on a clean rack in the top half of a kitchen oven. If you use a kitchen oven, open the oven door to the first or second stop. Heat at 120 to 150 degrees F (lowest oven temperature) for nine to 24 hours or until the desired dryness is reached. Remove jerky from oven before it gets too hard or brittle. Properly dried jerky should crack when bent in half but should not break into two pieces.
6. Store in clean jars or plastic bags, or wrap in freezer paper and freeze. If kept dry, properly prepared jerky will last almost indefinitely at any temperature, but its quality deteriorates in a few months.

\*Source of recipe: *You and Your Wild Game*, 1984 by R.A. Field and C.A. Raab, University of Wyoming Agricultural Extension Service, B-613R, p. 58. **Note:** "Hot Pickle Cure Jerky" and "Vinegar-Marinade Preparation Method" are the only recipes for jerky currently recommended by University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service.

## **Recipe #2: Vinegar - Marinade Preparation Method\*\***

### **Ingredients per 2 pounds of lean meat slices:**

#### **Pre-treatment dip:**

2 cups vinegar

#### **Marinade ingredients:**

1/4 cup soy sauce  
1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce  
1/4 tsp. black pepper  
1/4 tsp. garlic powder  
1/2 tsp. onion powder  
1 tsp. hickory smoked salt

#### **Directions:**

Place 2 cups vinegar in 9" x 11" cake pan or plastic storage container. Add meat strips to container making sure vinegar covers all strips. Let soak 10 minutes, stirring occasionally to ensure distribution of vinegar on strips. Combine all marinade ingredients and place in a 1-gallon resealable plastic bag. Add lean meat slices to bag; seal bag and massage pieces to thoroughly distribute marinade over all meat strips. Refrigerate bag 1 to 24 hours. Remove meat slices from bag, and place flat without touching each other on clean dehydrator trays, oven racks, or other drying trays. Place trays in preheated dehydrator, and dry at 145 degrees Fahrenheit for 10 to 14 hours or until slices are adequately dry.

\*\*Source of recipe: *Leathers and Jerkies*. CSU Bulletin 9.311; P. Kendall and J. Sofos, Colorado State University, March 2003 and updated July 2006. Available at [www.ext.colostate.edu/PUBS/foodnut/09311.html](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/PUBS/foodnut/09311.html). **Note:** "Hot Pickle Cure Jerky" and "Vinegar-Marinade Preparation Method" are the only recipes for jerky currently recommended by University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service.

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