

Jerky

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ - 2 pounds of lean meat (beef, pork, or venison)
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 teaspoons hickory smoke flavoring
- ¼ teaspoon each of black pepper and garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon salt

Directions:

Combine all ingredients. Place strips or ground meat in a shallow pan and cover with marinade. Cover and refrigerate 1-2 hours or overnight. Products marinated for several hours may be more salty than some people prefer. If you choose to heat the meat prior to drying to decrease the risk of foodborne illness, do so at the end of the marination time. To heat, bring strips and marinade to a boil and boil for 5 minutes before draining and drying. If strips are more than ¼ inch thick, the length of time may need to be increased. If possible, check the temperature of several strips with a metal stem-type thermometer to determine that 160°F has been reached. See below for method used for ground meat.



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Drying

Remove meat strips from the marinade and drain on clean, absorbent towels. Arrange strips on dehydrator trays or cake racks placed on baking sheets for oven drying. Place the slices close together, but not touching or overlapping. Place the racks in a dehydrator or oven preheated to 140°F. Dry until a test piece cracks but does not break when it is bent (10 to 24 hours for samples not heated in marinade). Samples heated in marinade will dry faster. Begin checking samples after 3 hours. Once drying is completed, pat off any beads of oil with clean, absorbent towels and cool. Remove strips from the racks. Cool. Package in glass jars or heavy plastic food storage bags. Vacuum packaging is also a good option.

If the strips or ground meat were not heated in marinade prior to drying, they can be heated in an oven after drying as an added safety measure. Place strips on a baking sheet, close together, but not touching or overlapping. For strips originally cut 1/4 inch thick or less, heat 10 minutes in an oven preheated to 275°F. (Thicker strips may require longer heating to reach 160°F.)

Jerky can be made from ground meat using special presses to form or shape the product. Disease-causing microorganisms are more difficult to eliminate in ground meat than in whole meat strips. (If ground meat is used, follow the general tips for safe handling of meat above.) Be sure to follow the dehydrator manufacturer's directions when heating the product at the end of drying time. Again, an internal temperature of 160°F is necessary to eliminate disease-causing bacteria such as *E. coli* O157:H7, if present.