

Dried Hamburger Jerky

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Here is a recipe that a visitor to our website sent to me via email in 2012. It is just as good now as it was then. Here is something that he does with hamburger to preserve it that you are sure to enjoy. He makes what he calls jerky strips.

He usually starts with a low-fat burger, or he will grind his own (less expensive but more labor intensive – he uses a hand powered grinder). When making regular jerky you cut off any fat from the meat as it will tend to develop a rancid type of taste. Although he used an oven when making the jerky you could likely employ your food dehydrator if you so choose.

Begin by rolling the burger into a 1/4-inch layer, and place it on parchment paper lined baking sheets. The parchment paper isn't strictly necessary but makes it much easier to work with the jerky, otherwise you need to oil the pans to prevent sticking. Season the meat as you desire prior placing on the sheets. It is recommended to use salt and pepper, garlic, onion powder or any combinations of your favorite seasonings.

Now put the pans in the oven set at 180 F to 200 F, and bake the hamburger for one hour. The door does not need to be cracked open for this process as the 180 F is the temperature required to kill any possible bacteria. You should start all homemade jerky this way.

When completed take the meat from the oven and slice it into one-inch strips. Pat off any oil that may be present on the meat, and place the strips into oven directly on a

rack without a pan. Bake it at 170 F to 130 F with the door cracked open for approximately 3 to 4 hours until the meat is dry.

You can use a wooden spoon to hold the door open while baking the hamburger. If you are worried about any possible dripping you can slide a pan under the rack or place tin foil on the oven bottom below the strips. You should not really have a drip problem at this stage. The strips are completed when the meat cracks when bent. Do not cook the jerky until the meat becomes brittle, but only until it is dry to the touch. You can eat it as jerky, or cut it up and use it in recipes.

The finished product can be packaged by placing the strips in plastic Ziplocs with the air squeezed out. They should stay good for a month to a year with no refrigeration although most bags are generally eaten quickly. The writer has had a few that were older than one year. These older pieces had no deterioration in taste, although they were a bit dry. If it ever starts to turn bad you should be able to see and smell it. As long as they stay dry this should not be a problem. With modern methods of sealing bags this product could be made to last for several years.