

## How To Make Deer/Beef Jerky At Home

The following guidelines were written using beef as the "main" ingredient.  
These guidelines work equally well with deer.

- The best beef cut to use in making jerky is beef top round.
- Look for a freshly cut top round roast at your grocery store or butcher shop and ask the meat cutter to slice the roast 1/4 of an inch thick.
- (They may charge 10 to 25 cents a pound to do this, but it is well, well worth the money!)
- The best deer cut to use in making jerky is the loin, followed by the top or bottom round section of the deer ham (also called the deer hind quarter)
- Make sure to trim all the visible fat and silver skin off of the deer meat

We'll start with some of the basics first - then get into the actual recipe.  
(And I know of a least 50 different recipes for making beef jerky, so I will just give you a basic one to start with. You can add or subtract many of the ingredients as you experiment.)

1 bag of AC Legg Jerky Seasoning and one – 1 oz. Bag of [Sodium Nitrite \(Speed Cure\)](#) will season 25 lbs. of whole muscle or ground jerky.  
[Our own Jerky mixes already has the Sodium Nitrite (Speed Cure) mixed in]

Breakdown for smaller batches than 25 lbs. depends on which Jerky Seasoning you are using.  
*{The amount to use per lb. of each flavor of Jerky Seasoning is listed on the last page of these instructions.}*

1.) I'll be talking about making "whole muscle" Beef jerky. This is not the same as ground and formed or hamburger type jerky. We only use Beef Top Round to make our Beef Jerky. We feel that it is the best cut for jerky. Below is a photo of a Beef Top Round.



2.) If you don't have some kind of mechanical slicer, I suggest you buy one or take the beef top round to a butcher shop for slicing. Rival and Chefs' Choice are two companies who make food slicers for retail sale.

The reason why you need one? To make really good jerky, the jerky meat needs to be the same thickness throughout the meat, one-fourth of an inch thick is standard. It is impossible to cut the top round by hand consistently at one-fourth of an inch. Below is a photo of Beef Top Round sliced 1/4 inch thick.



Here's a good tip: freeze the top round about one hour in your freezer before slicing if you are slicing the meat yourself at home, this will make it easier to slice!

I personally slice the meat across the grain. I think this is about 50/50 in the real world. Half the people say to slice it with the grain, the other half against the grain.

I've done it both ways many, many times, and it seems that if you slice against the grain, the jerky is not so hard to chew when it is dried. (And for people with bad teeth that is worth trying!)

3.) I always use a dry seasoning (AC Legg Brand or our own mix) for deer or beef jerky. Some people use some type of liquid, such as soy sauce or Worcestershire sauce, but I think the jerky tastes better without liquid. This is because you are trying to remove all of the moisture out of the meat when you make jerky, so why add extra to it.

4.) As for as what seasoning to use? I use the AC Legg Traditional Jerky Seasoning most often. AC Legg Jerky Seasonings are available in Traditional, Pepper & Cajun. For a nice change I will use our own Mesquite Jerky Seasoning. Of course there are hundreds of Home Made recipes for the spices to use in Jerky Seasoning also.

5.) [Sodium Nitrite \(also called Speed Cure, Quick Cure or InstaCure\)](#), is used VERY sparingly. The recommendation from the government is 6.25%. This breaks down to 4 oz. per 100 lbs., or 1 oz. per 25 lbs. If you are making a batch of Jerky smaller than 25 lbs. use approximately 1 GRAM of Sodium Nitrite per 1 lb. of meat. All of our jerky seasoning includes the proper amount of sodium nitrite either in a separate bag with the AC Legg Jerky Seasonings or already mixed in with Our Own Jerky Seasonings.

Some people don't use Sodium Nitrite to make their jerky, but I HIGHLY recommend to for food safety.

6. I sprinkle the seasoning on both sides of each jerky strip. (Sorry, but I still just "eyeball" this, so I can't give you any exact measurements.) You can get an idea of how much seasoning we use from the picture below. We give each piece of meat a thorough covering. Below is a photo of the strips of Beef Top Round being seasoned.



I place the seasoned jerky strips in a plastic container, cover with a piece of wax paper or plastic wrap loosely, and place in the refrigerator for overnight. We usually season the jerky in the late afternoon and smoke it the next morning around 8 a.m.

(I don't recommend refrigerating over 24 hours - I think this makes the meat mushy and less flavorful.)

7.) I then lay the jerky strips on stainless steel screens in my smokehouse for 6 to 6 1/2 hours at 150 to 165 degrees. Place the slices close together, but not touching or overlapping.



You can also hang the jerky strips from [Bacon Hangers](#) and place them in the smokehouse. We use [Hickory Sawdust](#) to smoke our jerky with, although other types of wood can be used to smoke jerky with.

[If you don't have a smoker or smokehouse, a close approximation to this would be place in your oven for about the same time and temp., and remember to leave the oven door slightly open.]

8.) Dry until a piece of *jerky cracks but does not break* when it is bent. This is when the jerky is done. Properly dried jerky is chewy and leathery. It will be as brittle as a green stick, but won't snap like a dry stick.

If you have an Infrared Thermometer a good temperature to smoke/dry to would be around 150° F.

To test for the jerky for the proper dryness, remove a strip from the oven or dehydrator. Let it cool slightly, and then bend the jerky; it should crack, but not break.

9.) For best results, to increase shelf life and maintain best flavor and quality, freeze the jerky, vacuum package it or place in air-tight bags (not zip-loc bags) and place a packet of oxygen absorbers in the bag. (We use oxygen absorbers at our Meat Processing Plant.) Label and date the jerky packages.

That's about it. If you make a larger batch of jerky seasoning, you can easily and safely freeze what you won't eat in the immediate future. It will last over a year easily.

On the following page is a picture of our Beef Jerky made with these instructions.



Amount of Jerky Seasoning To Use Per Lb. by Variety of Jerky Seasoning  
{2 Tablespoons = 1 oz.}

- [AC Legg Traditional Jerky Seasoning](#): 1 oz. Seasons 1.9 lbs. of Meat.
- [AC Legg Peppered Jerky Seasoning](#): 1 oz. Seasons 1.85 lbs. of Meat.
- [AC Legg Cajun Jerky Seasoning](#): 1 oz. Seasons 1.75 lbs. of Meat.
- [Our Own Mesquite Jerky Seasoning](#): 1 oz. Seasons 2.5 lbs. of Meat.
- [Our Own Teriyaki Jerky Seasoning](#): 1 oz. Seasons 1.78 lbs. of Meat.
- [Our Own Hot Teriyaki Jerky Seasoning](#): 1 oz. Seasons 1.92 lbs. of Meat.
- [Our Own Smokin' Hot Jerky Seasoning](#): 1 oz. Seasons 2.08 lbs. of Meat.
- [Our Own Flamin' Hot Jerky Seasoning](#): 1 oz. Seasons 1.92 lbs. of Meat.
- [Our Own Barbecue Jerky Seasoning](#): 1 oz. Seasons 1.92 lbs. of Meat.

[Sodium Nitrite \(Also Called Speed Cure or Quick Cure\)](#):

1 oz. per 25 lbs. of meat. Or .9 Grams per 1 lb. of Meat

According to a study published by the American Medical Association, E. Coli can survive drying times of up to 10 hours and temperatures of up to 145 degrees F. It is recommended that venison being dried for jerky should be precooked to an internal temperature of at least 165 ° F.

Hunters and other consumers need to understand that wild game should be handled and cooked with the same caution recommended for other meats.