

Homemade Chicken Jerky - Both Oven and Dehydrator Method 4/2013 by Carol Ely

Note: Dehydrator method is preferred

Ingredients

1 ½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken (I make larger batches and freeze some).

Note: Breast meat will be easier to cut into thin strips, but I have used boneless thighs & legs
½ cup vegetable oil for the Dehydrator method.

You can add some dog safe seasonings if you would like, but my dogs like it natural.

Rinse off the chicken breast and remove any fat. Fat is very hard to dry properly. Slice the chicken with the grain - this is easier if you freeze the chicken for about 20 minutes before slicing. The slices should be very thin, about 1/8" to 1/4" thickness.

Always remember to wash your hands thoroughly, after handling raw chicken.

Dehydrator Method

- 1. Dip chicken in vegetable oil then place the chicken breast strips in an even layer across the entire tray, leaving an equal amount of space between pieces and making sure that they do not touch each other. This is so air can flow between them while they are drying out, which helps dehydrate them. I usually place a layer of paper towels under the trays, on the counter, for the dripping oil.**
- 2. Once the strips are all set out, place the trays in the food dehydrator, turn it on, and set the temperature for 140°F. It will probably take between 4 and 14 hours for the chicken to fully dry, depending on how thick you cut your slices and the exact temperature of your food dehydrator.**
- 3. Flip the strips over at about the halfway point. Check the strips once every hour after 3 hours. To do that, simply open up the dehydrator and take one slice out; cut it open with a sharp knife or break in half and examine the inside. You should see no moisture at all, and if it is properly dried, the chicken will have the same color throughout. If it is not finished, put it back in for another hour. Once it gets close, start checking once every half hour.**

Oven Instructions: Note: I have not used the oven method since we have a very large dehydrator. The instructions are common to most recipes.

1. Preheat oven to 200° F
2. Lightly grease a baking sheet.
3. Place the strips on the baking sheet.
4. Bake for approximately 2 to 2 ½ hours (see note below). Flip over once at halfway point. When it is close to end time, check every 30 min. **To check for doneness, take one slice out; cut it open with a sharp knife or break in half and examine the inside. You should see no moisture at all, and if it is properly dried, the chicken will have the same color throughout. If it is not finished, put it back in for another hour. Once it gets close, start checking once every half hour.**
5. Remove from oven and cool on a wire rack, until completely cool.

Important Note: The baking times will vary due to difference in ovens, temperatures and meat size. Your jerky treats should be firm and dry, not at all soft or spongy. It is safer to go a little extra dry and firm than for the meat to be underdone.

Cutting - Once the treats are cool, it's easier to cut them with kitchen scissors or just break apart pieces.

Once your chicken jerky is done, store it in sealed containers; zip-lock bags work great for this. Be sure to note the production date on your bag or container. I always store the finished product in the refrigerator for safety. They should be put in the freezer, if you are not going to use them within 3 weeks. It is so much better to know how they were made, and with what ingredients.