



## JERKY JUBILEE

As the battery life of my smartphone dwindles, it's reflexive to pick up the device for one last attempt to preserve its precious power. I'll turn the screen brightness down to an ember and send out a text-based beacon to anyone willing to hear my plight—a frowny face and #FirstWorldProblems.

Ancient world problems of preservation, however, take an entirely different form. What do you do when you've hunted a buffalo or other animal of mammoth proportions? After all, you can't possibly eat it all in one sitting. Cultures as old and wise as the ancient Egyptians have solved this riddle through drying meat—effectively preserving it as a nutrient-dense snack for later. Today the trend

continues, not for survival, but for portable protein that tastes great.

### HANG 'EM DRY

Drying meat expels moisture, locking out bacterial and fungal enzymes that conspire to react with the food and cause spoilage, while leaving the meat's nutritional content virtually unchanged. Meat must be dried quickly with a reliable heat source like a dehydrator. Inconsistent or too-low heat is an open invitation for bacteria to gain heat resistance, thrive, and harm the consumer. Lean meats are most suitable to dry, as the process won't shield fat from microbial spoilage.

Sources: USDA, FAO

### DON'T JERK MY CHAIN

But wait a minute, isn't jerky just gas station junk food? Not if you know what to avoid. A lot has changed since the highly processed sinew of yore. Healthy options are rolling off the dehydrator, and not just beef—turkey, pork, bison, and even wild boar, now make for delightful chewing. Indulgent flavors burst with natural ingredients, have minimal salt and sugar, and deliver a potent protein punch. North of 10 grams per serving is common, and since jerky is virtually fat-free, it's the lean, top-shelf protein you desire.

### WHAT WE'D JERK OUT OF JERKY

Now that you know why jerky is giving potato chips and "cheese" puffs a high-octane kick in the pants, you should be aware of some limitations to abide when shopping for your favorite jerky. Spot these tell-tale signs of foul play and avoid these ingredient jerks once and for all.

**SODIUM AND NITRATES.** These are used as a curing mixture and have been shown by *The Journal of Food Protection* to halve the amount of surviving *E.coli* bacteria in finished jerky. But that only sounds fantastic, as nitrates have been linked to heart disease and cancer, and can be replaced by vinegar to cure jerky.

**CORN SYRUP.** By definition, dehydrating meat removes most of its water weight. What some jerky companies don't want you to know is they will load up their products with unnecessary amounts of sugar to add some of that weight back in. The heavier it is, the more they can sell it for.

### MONOSODIUM GLUTAMATE (MSG).

A study in *BMG Neuroscience* showed that MSG activates taste buds that release serotonin, a neurotransmitter that regulates mood—you'll literally get happier with each bite, and crave another. Obesity, headaches, fatigue, and depression are among the adverse effects linked to the flavor enhancer, according to [organicconsumers.org](http://organicconsumers.org).

If picking additive-free jerky out of a lineup still sounds difficult, don't worry!  
We munched through stacks of jerky and came up with this list of cured meats to dry for.



**Field Trip**

Incepted by a trio of guys whose taste for gas station jerky shriveled up, Field Trip jerky is nothing like the artificial slabs they've abandoned. We loved the lack of added MSG, preservatives, nitrates or nitrites, or any ingredients that could have been copped from a laundry detergent label, like disodium inosinate or sodium erythorbate. We gobbled this gluten-free turkey jerky ceaselessly. // fieldtripjerky.com



**New Zealand Jerky**

This savory treat doesn't lean on added MSG to make your mouth water. The fresh flavor of free-range, grass-fed cows from New Zealand does that on its own. We were willing to forgive the 7 grams of sugar in light of its avoidance of nasties like: nitrites, corn syrup, preservatives, artificial coloring, GMOs, and more. // newzealandjerky.com



**Durham Ranch**

The Honey BBQ Smoked Boar jerky from Durham Ranch wowed us on all counts. It's not just the smoky honey and earthy nut flavors that caused the big bad wolf to huff and puff. He also wanted to get a workout in before feasting on an astounding 27 grams of protein per 2-ounce serving of these piggy pig pigs. // durhambisonranch.com



**Dick Stevens**

Dick Stevens jerky mix is for the exalted explorer whose bold sense of adventure needs bold nourishment. Dick Stevens Jerky + Trail Mix Beef nestles bite-sized, grass-fed beef morsels between nuts, berries, and quinoa for a powerful trail mix that's packed with antioxidants and healthy mono- and polyunsaturated fats. Give it a permanent spot next to your map and flashlight, and don't look back. // dickstevens.com

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THE PERCENTAGE OF CHINESE YAK JERKY SAMPLES FOUND IN ONE STUDY TO CONTAIN MEAT FROM OTHER SPECIES

10

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE SAMPLES IN THE STUDY THAT CONTAINED MEAT FROM SMALL MAMMALS LIKE THE SHREW AND CHINESE MOLE SHREW. SOURCE: SCIENCE CHINA LIFE SCIENCES



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**Ay Ta Tc**

**FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE | NOTES FROM OUR FORMULATORS**

Natural Eggshell Membrane delivers the whole food nutrients necessary for healthy joint structure. Joint Health Advanced includes whole fruit antioxidants and extracts of Boswellia, used in Ayurvedic and Traditional African Medicine, and Turmeric, one of the most respected herbs in Ayurvedic and Traditional Chinese Medicine.



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