

Drying Ground Beef

By Joseph Parish



As I was wandering around on the internet I chanced upon a website where the writer was explaining how to dehydrate ground beef. My wife and I had previously toyed with the idea in the past but this time we decided to actually try it out.

My wife buys her ground beef in five-pound packages and she had just made a meal for the family the night before and did not use all the beef that she had available. This was an excellent opportunity to try this dehydrating experiment.

She first started by chopping up and browning the ground beef in a cast iron skillet. After breaking up the meat into small pieces she added several cups of water to the mixture and heated it over a medium heat. She continued to chop and mix the beef until it was completely cooked.

When she started seeing fat developing in the water, she would move the meat into a colander and then run hot water over it. This process will clean off the extra grease which has separated from the meat.

Her next task was to again replace the meat into a cleaned skillet along with some fresh water and bring once again to a boil. As she noticed some fat develop in the liquid and appear on the top of the water, she knew that a second rinsing was in order. She

drained this again as she had done previously with the colander and rinsed it under hot water.

She repeated this process three times until there was no longer any grease appearing. Since she generally purchases the better-quality ground beef she has much less fat than would be expected. After the last boiling she allowed the beef to drain well in the colander until it was dry to the touch.

Although she could very well have used the dehydrator to dry the meat, she decided to employ the oven for the process instead. She spread the drained beef onto a nonstick cookie sheet and placed it into a 200-degree oven. Times will vary greatly from oven to oven and from one batch to the next but usually the drying time will be between 6 and 8 hours.

As the completion time approaches the beef should give a dried appearance similar to gravel but extremely hard. She next took the final dehydrated ground beef and placed it in a sterilized mason jar along with an oxygen absorber to remove all traces of air from within. Our estimate is that with the oxygen absorber in place the product should be good for several years if stored in a dark, cool location.

To rehydrate this product, you will merely need to add water and wait a few minutes for it to absorb the liquid. You can speed up the process with heat if you plan to mix it with other foods.

My wife did not add any spices to the beef when she was dehydrating it but wanted a more universal product that could be used for a variety of beef dishes. The flavorings can be included when the ground beef is rehydrated. You now have a dehydrated ground beef product that should relieve some of the worry from losing electricity during emergency times. If you try this procedure let us know how it came out for you.