

NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife



2014 Black Bear Recipe Guide

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HOW TO BUTCHER A BEAR

Tools

- 6- to 8-inch hunting knife
- Cutting board
- Bone-saw, heavy-duty
- hacksaw or electric saw
- Large refrigerator or freezer
- Large, cleanable table
- 9- to 12-foot upright/free-standing structure (optional)
- 12- to 20-foot chain (optional)
- Hook (optional)

Directions

- Skin your bear so that you are left with a headless and paw-less carcass covered in layers of white fat. Lay the bear carcass out on your large table or suspend the bear from its hind legs about 3 feet from the ground using your chain, hook and upright.
- Cut off the layers of fat with your hunting knife. Bears have two types of fat: The outer layer is jelly-like while the layer closer to the muscle is firmer, like beef tallow. Use carefully executed cuts to shave off the fat in chunks, getting as close to the red bear meat as possible. Discard the fat or reserve the pieces to render into bear lard or grease.
- Remove the fillets. To do this, saw the sternum down the middle then split the rib cage into two halves. The tenderloins or fillets are the muscles that run along the spine from the bottom of the rib cage to just before the hind legs. Reserve these if you want bear steaks or simply cube into roughly 2 1/2 by 2 1/2 inch pieces like you will be doing to the rest of the bear meat.
- Peel the meat from the ribs. Insert the knife just under the rib meat on the outside of the animal's rib cage making a generous incision. Run your knife along flesh and the rib bones as you pull the meat back, peeling off the rib meat.
- Remove the meat from the front and back legs. Holding out the limb, use your knife to cut the meat, sinew and tendons away from shoulder and hip joints and then saw off each limb at the exposed joint. Cut meat away from each leg and cube.
- Strip and cube the remaining meat from the carcass. The remaining meat will mostly be around the shoulders.
- Place cubes of meat in an airtight container or in plastic bags. Place in your refrigerator or freezer, or grind with spices and other meat (traditionally pork) to make ground meat for hamburgers or sausage.

HOW TO SAFELY COOK BEAR MEAT

Black bear meat can be a carrier of *Trichinella spiralis* and *Toxoplasma gondii*, the parasites that cause the diseases trichinosis and toxoplasmosis in humans. Proper cooking techniques can ensure that your bear meat is safe to eat. Like pork, the proper cooking time for bear meat is 375 degrees F for 20-25 minutes per pound. Internal cooking temperature should reach 160 degrees for 3 minutes or more before consumption. Cook until there is no trace of pink meat or fluid paying close attention to areas around the joints and close to the bone. Freezing meat does not always kill these parasites.

Connoisseurs of bear meat suggest freezing, canning or eating it within a week after the kill as the flavor becomes stronger with age. Trim fat from the meat especially well and, as is the case with all meat, good wrapping and sealing is recommended.

2014 NEW! Recipes

Grilled, Spiced Bear Tenderloin <i>*Highly Recommended!</i>	
Ingredients – 1 lb bear tenderloin or back strap, trimmed of all fat and silver skin – 1 tbsp. vegetable oil Spice Mix – 1 tsp. salt – 1 ½ tsp. black pepper – 1 ½ tsp. ground allspice – ¾ tsp. ground cinnamon – ¾ ground clove – ½ tsp. ground nutmeg OR use any combination of your favorite game spices!	Directions 1. In small bowl, mix all spices until combined 2. Add oil and stir to make a paste 3. Prepare tenderloin, making sure all fat is trimmed. <i>Caution: When grilling bear meat, dripping fat will ignite! Trim all fat before cooking!</i> 4. Rub all sides of the trimmed tenderloin evenly with spice paste. Set aside. 5. Prepare grill (charcoal recommended) for medium heat 6. Place tenderloin on grill and cook slowly on medium heat until fully cooked, turning occasionally 7. Allow bear meat to reach an internal temp of 160 degrees F before consumption

Charcoal Grilled Leg of Bear <i>*A Tried and True Recipe!</i>	
Ingredients – 1 whole hind leg (rump to shank), trimmed of all fat and silver skin – Your choice of spices to taste * To prevent the outside of the leg from charring, monitor temperature with a thermometer and use indirect-heat or hot-smoke cooking methods * Add smokewood chunks to charcoal to create a fragrant smoke on the meat!	Directions 1. Prepare leg, making sure all fat is trimmed <i>Caution: When grilling bear meat, dripping fat will ignite! Trim all fat before cooking!</i> 2. Sprinkle or rub all sides of the trimmed leg evenly with spices 3. Prepare charcoal grill for low to medium heat or an indirect-heat set up 4. Place leg on grill and cook slowly for 6-10 hours or until desired doneness, turning occasionally and re-seasoning 5. Allow bear meat to reach an internal temp of 160 degrees F before consumption

Charcoal Grilled Bear Ribs **Highly Recommended!!!*

Ingredients

- Full or half rack of ribs trimmed of all fat, gristle and silver skin. If ribs are too long, saw in half
- Your choice of spices to taste

* To prevent charring, monitor temperature with a thermometer and use indirect-heat or hot-smoke cooking methods

* Add smokewood chunks to charcoal to create a fragrant smoke on the meat!

Directions

1. Prepare ribs, making sure to trim all meat and gristle along bottom of ribs. Trim all fat

Caution: When grilling bear meat, dripping fat will ignite! Trim all fat before cooking!

2. Sprinkle or rub all sides of the ribs evenly with spices
3. Prepare charcoal grill for low to medium heat or an indirect-heat set up
4. Place ribs on grill and cook slowly for 6-10 hours or until desired doneness, turning occasionally and re-seasoning
5. **Allow bear meat to reach an internal temp of 160 degrees F before consumption**

Sweet & Sour Bear Pot Roast

Ingredients

- 3 to 4 lb bottom round, rump or shoulder roast, tied if necessary
- 2 large onions, sliced
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ cup honey
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ½ tsp. grated lemon peel
- ¼ tsp. ground cloves
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 3 medium carrots, cut into 2 inch pieces
- 1 lb red potatoes, cut into 2 inch pieces

Directions

1. Heat oven to 325 degrees F.
2. In Dutch oven, heat oil and brown meat on all sides, about 10 minutes, turning frequently
3. Remove from heat, drain and add onions
4. In separate bowl, combine sugar, honey, lemon juice, lemon peel and clove
5. Pour mixture over roast and onions and sprinkle with salt and pepper
6. Cover tightly and roast for 1 hour, basting occasionally
7. Add carrots and potatoes, making sure they are submerged into pan juices
8. Continue roasting for 2 to 3 hours until meat is cooked through and vegetables are tender
9. Serve roast with pan juices or turn pan juices into a simple gravy by whisking in small amounts of flour until desired consistency is reached

Shepherds Pie **Use bear meat to give this classic dish a twist!!*

Ingredients

- 1 lb ground bear meat
- 1 lb potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1 tbsp. canola oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 2 tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 (14 oz) can beef broth
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 tbsp. butter
- 2 tbsp. ketchup
- 1 tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp. mild curry powder
- 1 tbsp. cornstarch
- 1 (16 oz) package frozen mixed peas and carrots
- 1 cup shredded extra-sharp cheddar cheese
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil.
2. Add potatoes, and cook until tender but still firm, about 15 minutes. Drain, and return to pan.
3. While potatoes are boiling, heat oil in a large skillet.
4. Cook ground bear with onion, red pepper, and garlic until meat is evenly brown
5. Stir in beef broth, ketchup, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, and curry powder. Bring to a boil, and simmer 3 to 4 minutes.
6. Mix cornstarch with a little water to form a paste, and then stir into skillet with tomatoes, peas and carrots
7. Cook until thickened; season with salt and pepper. Spoon into a casserole dish.
8. Preheat oven on broiler setting.
9. Add milk and butter to cooked potatoes, and whip until smooth and creamy.
10. Spoon over meat mixture. Sprinkle top with shredded cheese.
11. Place under broiler for 3 to 5 minutes, or until cheese is melted and speckled with brown

Spicy Bratwurst-Style Bear Sausage *Makes about 24 sausages*

Ingredients

- 10 Feet medium hog casings
- 3 lb Bear meat, ground
- 3 lb Pork meat, ground
- 2 tbsp. canning / pickling salt
- 2 tbsp. dried parsley
- 1 tbsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 tbsp. dried onion flakes
- 2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. black pepper

Directions

1. Prepare casings as directed
2. Combine both bear and pork meat in large bowl
3. In smaller bowl, combine all seasonings
4. Sprinkle seasoning mixture over meat and hand mix until evenly distributed
5. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to stuff
6. Stuff casings and tie off into 6" links
7. Age links in the refrigerator for 2 days
8. Cook as for fresh pork sausage

Bear Gumbo **A Creole Specialty! Use sausage recipe above!*

Ingredients

- 1 lb spicy bratwurst-style bear sausage, sliced
- 2 tbsp. butter or margarine
- 1 cup sliced green onions
- 1 cup green pepper, seeded and chopped (~ 1 pepper)
- ½ cup fresh chopped parsley
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 tsp. dried thyme leaves
- 1/2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp. dried basil
- ¼ tsp. cayenne powder
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 package (16 oz) frozen cut okra
- 1 can (16 oz) stewed tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 1 can (15 oz) tomato sauce
- 1 can (10 oz) chicken broth

Directions

1. In large stockpot or dutch oven, cook sausages 5-7 minutes or until brown
2. Drain and set aside. Wipe out pot.
3. In same pot, melt butter
4. Add onions, green pepper, parsley and garlic. Cook until tender
5. Stir in remaining ingredients
6. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring occasionally
7. Reduce heat and simmer 15 to 20 minutes or until okra is tender
8. Remove bay leaf before serving
9. Serve over white rice

Bear Lard <i>*Great for cooking and deep frying! Makes a delicious pie crust!</i>	
Ingredients – All trimmed fat from bear carcass – Cold Water	Directions 1. Trim all fat from bear carcass and put into crock pot 2. Cover with cold water 3. Bring to a boil and then simmer on low for 4-5 hours 4. Skim off all impurities as they rise to the top 5. Continue simmering on low until water has evaporated and fat is rendered 6. Be careful not to burn the fat

Bear Fat Pie Crust <i>*Great for savory and/or sweet pies!!</i>	
Ingredients – 1 cup chilled bear fat – 3 cups sifted flour – 1 tsp. salt – ½ cup cold milk	Directions 7. Sift flour 8. Measure 3 cups sifted flour 9. Sift in salt 10. With a pastry cutter, cut half of the bear fat into the flour mixture until mixture resembles coarse cornmeal 11. Cut in the remaining 4 tbsps of bear fat until crumbly 12. Add ½ cup cold milk and gently mix with a fork until evenly incorporated. 13. Squeeze a small amount of the mixture in the palm of your hand. If it doesn't hold together, add an additional tbsp of milk 14. Dump the dough mixture out onto a large piece of plastic wrap 15. Gently press together until the mixture forms a loose ball. Do not overwork. 16. Wrap the dough in the plastic wrap and refrigerator for at least 30 minutes before use

STEAKS

Bear Steak with Mushrooms & Rice

Ingredients

- 1 ½ -2 lbs bear steak (cut in thin strips)
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 onions, cut into sliced rings
- 1 (10 ¾ ounce) can condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 1 (4 ounce) can sliced mushrooms (drain & reserve liquid)
- ¾ cup dry sherry
- 2-3 pinches minced garlic, to taste
- hot cooked rice, as much as you like

Directions

1. Cut bear steak into thin strips about finger width.
2. In a cast iron skillet brown bear meat in oil, using high heat.
3. Add onions.
4. Sauté until tender.
5. Blend soup, sherry, liquid from mushrooms, and minced garlic.
6. Pour over steak meat.
7. Add mushrooms.
8. Reduce heat; cover and simmer approx 1 hour or until steak is tender.
9. Serve over a nice plate of hot rice with a few splashes of soy sauce.

Black Bear Osso Bucco **An Italian Classic with a twist!*

Ingredients

- 4 cross-cut bear shanks, 2-3 inches thick
- Salt
- Flour for dusting
- ¼ cup olive oil, butter or bear fat
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- ½ ounce dried porcini mushrooms (about a handful), chopped
- 1 cup white wine
- 1 cup chicken, beef or game stock
- 1 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- Zest of a lemon cut into large strips, white pith removed
- 2 bay leaves

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees
2. Heat olive oil in a large oven-safe pot over medium heat
3. Salt and flour the bear shanks and add them to the oil to brown
4. Thoroughly brown on all sides before removing from heat, set aside
5. Add onion, carrot, celery and mushrooms. Sauté until slightly browned around the edges, about 6 to 8 minutes
6. Pour in the white wine and scrape up any browned bits on the bottom of the pot
7. When this comes to a boil, add the stock, crushed tomatoes, thyme, oregano, lemon zest and bay leaves and bring to a simmer
8. Return the shanks to the pot and turn to coat with the sauce. Cover the pot and move it to the oven
9. Cook until very tender, between 2 and 4 hours
10. Serve with bread, polenta or risotto

ROASTS & RIBS

Oven- Barbequed Bear Ribs **Highly Recommended!*

Ingredients

- 2 to 3 lbs bear ribs
- 2 ½ cups water
- 1/2 cup catsup
- 1/4 cup cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup finely chopped onion
- 3 Tbsp packed brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp paprika
- 1 tsp. dry mustard
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp liquid smoke flavoring
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1/4 tsp chili powder

Directions

1. In a small bowl, combine all sauce ingredients, excluding ribs & water
2. In a Dutch oven, combine ribs, 2 cups of water and 3/4 cup of the sauce
3. Heat rib mixture to boiling
4. Reduce heat and cover
5. Simmer until ribs are tender, about 1 ½ to 2 hours, rearranging ribs occasionally
6. Heat oven to 350 degrees
7. Arrange ribs on roasting pan and brush with remaining sauce
8. Bake for 10 minutes; turn over
9. Brush again with sauce
10. Bake for 10 minutes longer

CHUNK & GROUND MEAT

Try combining bear with your favorite ground meats!

Bear/venison, bear/pork, bear/beef

Basic Bear Stew **Great on its own or over egg noodles or rice!*

Ingredients

- 1 ½ to 2 lbs bear chunk meat
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 can (16 oz) whole tomatoes, un-drained
- 1 cup water
- 1/4 cup white wine or water
- 1 Tbsp vinegar
- 1 medium onion, cut in half lengthwise and thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 medium baking potatoes

Directions

1. Remove all fat and silver skin from meat and cut into 1 inch chunks
2. In large plastic food-storage bag, combine oregano, flour, salt and pepper; shake to mix
3. Add meat and shake to coat
4. In heavy medium saucepan, heat oil over medium-high heat until hot
5. Add meat and flour mixture
6. Brown meat while stirring occasionally
7. Add remaining ingredients except potatoes; mix well
8. Heat to boiling; Reduce heat and cover
9. Simmer for 1 hour, stirring occasionally
10. While stew is simmering, cut potatoes into 1 inch chunks
11. Add potatoes to saucepan and bring back to a boil
12. Reduce heat and cover. Simmer for 1 hour, stirring occasionally
13. Remove bay leaf before serving

Bear Meatloaf

Ingredients

- 3 lbs ground bear meat
- 1 lb ground beef (high % fat)
- 3 cans Campbell's French onion soup
- 3 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups bread crumbs
- 1 can mushrooms 8 oz or larger
- 1/4 cup ketchup
- garlic powder (to taste)
- black pepper (to taste)

Directions

12. Drain the broth out of 2 cans of the French onion soup and set aside
13. Combine meat and all other ingredients (except 3rd can of soup) into a mixing bowl
14. Add the onions from the 2 cans of soup you drained earlier and mix well
15. Put into roasting pan and pour broth and the 3rd can of onion soup over top
16. Bake at 350 degrees for 2 1/2 hours or until done

Bear Chili

Ingredients

- 3 lbs ground bear meat
- 3 medium onions, chopped
- 3 medium green peppers, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 2 Tbs. bacon fat or vegetable oil
- 1 can (28 oz) whole tomatoes, drained
- 2 Tbs. dried parsley flakes
- 2 Tbs. chili powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 2 cans (15.5 oz) kidney beans, un-drained
- 1 can (16 oz) pinto beans, un-drained
- 1 bag shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 container (8 oz) sour cream

Directions

1. In a pan, brown meat over medium heat, stirring occasionally
2. Remove meat from pan and set aside
3. In pan, cook and stir onions, green peppers and celery in bacon fat over medium heat until tender
4. Add meat, vegetable mixture and all remaining ingredients, except beans into a Dutch oven or crock pot
5. Heat to boiling, then reduce heat and cover
6. Simmer for 1 hour to blend flavors

SMOKED MEATS

Because of low-temperature cooking, it is best to freeze your bear meat for 30 days prior to using it for jerky recipes

Traditional Smoked Jerky	
Ingredients – 1 ½ lbs boneless bear meat (makes approx. 3/4 lb. of jerky) – 2 ¼ tsp tenderizing salt – 1 ½ tsp pickling salt – 1 ½ tsp garlic powder – 1 ½ tsp pepper	Meat Preparation 1. In a small bowl, combine all seasonings together, Mix well 2. Slice meat with the grain into strips about 1/8 inch thick 3. Arrange in single layer in cutting board 4. Sprinkle meat with an even, generous layer of seasoning mixture 5. Pound meat lightly with a meat mallet 6. Turn strips over, season and pound second side Smoking Directions (Hickory, cherry, or mesquite woodchips work well with this recipe) 7. Arrange meat on smoker racks. Cold-smoke until strips are dry but not brittle, 5 hours or longer. Jerky will become more brittle as it cools 8. Rearrange racks periodically and add additional woods chips in necessary during smoking process 9. Refrigerate jerky for storage Oven-Method Directions (Jerky will not have smoke flavor) 1. Prepare meat strips as directed 2. Place in a single layer on a cookie-cooling rack (fine mesh or closely spaced bars work best) 3. Cook meat until dry but not brittle, 4-5 hours, rearranging racks once 4. Use an oven thermometer to be sure oven does not get too warm 5. Refrigerate jerky for storage

Smoked Bear Roast

Ingredients

- 5 lbs Bear Roast, trimmed
- Basil, Garlic, Vinegar & Water Marinade
- 2 lb Potatoes, peeled / sliced
- 1 lb Baby Carrots
- 2 Onions, quartered
- 10 Cloves Elephant Garlic
- 2 Ribs Celery, thinly sliced
- 1 Sprig Fresh Rosemary
- 1 Sprig Fresh Thyme
- 2 Tbsp Black Pepper
- 2 Tbsp Black Mustard Seed, crushed
- 4 Tbsp Worcestershire
- 2 Dried Tabasco Peppers, crushed

Directions

1. Marinate roast for 24 hours
2. Preheat your smoker to 225°F, using Mesquite Flavor chips as your smoking agent.
3. Put marinated roast in smoker and cook for 4 hours. Catch the drippings with a drip pan to save for later.
4. Remove roast from smoker and put in a large Dutch oven. Add all remaining ingredients including pan drippings and cook for 1 hour at 325°F. Your dish is done when vegetables are soft and the meat has reached an internal temperature of at least 170°F at its thickest point
5. Add flour to the Dutch oven to make a thick gravy (optional).

Teriyaki Jerky

Ingredients

- 3 lbs boneless bear meat
- 1/2 cup Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 cup Teriyaki sauce
- 1 Tbsp Liquid Smoke
- 1/2 Tbsp salt
- 1/2 Tbsp pepper

Directions

1. Combine all wet ingredients together
2. Add meat to wet mixture and soak in refrigerator overnight
3. Sprinkle salt and pepper onto meat before drying it
4. Smoke it on a low heat until dry, 5 hours or longer
5. Rearrange racks periodically and add more wood chips when necessary
6. When dried, sprinkle jerky with salt and pepper to taste
7. Refrigerate jerky for storage

Bear Bacon (Bearkin!)

Ingredients

- 1 entire bear stomach flap
- Bacon Curing Rub
(1 package of rub is good for curing several bear)

Directions

1. Lay the entire stomach flap on a flat cutting board and pat dry with paper towels
2. Follow directions on cure to get the “bearkin” ready for the smoker
3. Place the whole slab of cured bearkin in a cold smoker for 8 hours
4. Remove the bearkin from the smoker, wrap and refrigerate overnight
5. Slice the bearkin and fry, as you normally would with pork bacon

BEAR STOCK

Bear Stock

Ingredients

- Bear bones
- Scrap meat
- Desired seasonings
- 1 bottle Red Wine
- Coarsely chopped onion, leeks, celery, garlic (Any desired vegetable to taste)

Directions

1. Chop up bones so marrow is exposed
2. Place 2/3 of bones in oven and bake at 400 degrees F for 30 minutes, until brown and slightly burnt around the edges
3. Add the remaining bones to large pot
4. Add ½ to ¾ of a bottle of red wine to the pot
5. Bring wine to a rolling boil until it is almost completely boiled off.
6. Add coarsely chopped vegetables, garlic and desired seasonings to pot
7. Add baked bones
8. Fill pot to top with water and slowly boil, uncovered, for 3-4 hours.
9. When done, meat should be falling off the bone. If some meat is still firmly attached to bone, continue boiling until it loosens
10. Let cool and strain through metal strainer or cheese cloth for a clearer stock.