

Wild Hog Recipe Ideas

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Made correctly, wild pork is some of the best chemical-free organic meat around! As an avid hunter and cook, I wanted to show you some basic recipes ideas as well as some general guidelines for caring for and cooking your game. These recipes have either been submitted by other hunters or developed/modified by me. All of these recipes can also be used with many other meat types. Follow these tips and guidelines along with your own experiences and additions and you will create a following with your family and friends on the art of Bar-B-Que and grilling!

Care and Processing of Your Harvest

Quartering and processing your game can be done at our newly remodeled cleaning station at the ranch. Of course, you can always pay a butcher to process and to vacuum seal your game but I enjoy the art of having complete control over the process. After you get home you can easily go to any store and buy some masking tape and a large roll of freezer paper to wrap everything up.

Cutting and wrapping your meat is easy to do by yourself but do not be cheap/stingy on the freezer paper. Double wrap everything you pack away in the freezer to ensure your meat looks just as good when you put it away as it does when you take it out to cook it! Santa brought me a vacuum sealer for Christmas this past year and I have used it with wonderful results instead of freezer paper. Vacuum sealer bags for these appliances are a little more expensive than what freezer paper costs but they are well worth the price with the extra freshness and extended freezer life you get out of your meat.

If you kill a big boar, do not despair. I have killed and processed pigs in the 200-300 pound range that smelled awful but tasted great after doing a little trick. First, put your meat in an ice chest and cover it in lots of ice water. Combine a mixture of **one bottle of pure lemon juice** (32 ounces/1 Quart) and **one cup pure white vinegar** together in the ice water of each of your ice chests containing meat and mix it in well. Let this combination soak with your meat for the next 2-3 days. Keep draining the water and adding more ice during this time. You can add a little more of the white vinegar/pure lemon juice to your ice water if you feel that it is needed. It all depends on your situation. If your meat turns purple or looks discolored, its because you have too much vinegar in the water. The meat is still

fine, just add some fresh ice and drain your old water. After you are done with this process, rinse off your meat, wrap it up, and freeze it. Again, this procedure is mainly for large boars. Most sows and young boars can be processed immediately after you harvest them without this process.

Sausage/Burger/Ground Meat

When making burger, breakfast sausage, link sausage, or any other ground meat concoction, it is vital that you keep the area you are handling your ground meat on very clean as ground meat is a breeding ground for bacteria. Most of your ground meat can come from the trimmings of your tenderloins and back straps as well as your whole quarters. You can also chunk up your ham and shoulder quarters for burger, sausage, or any other ground meat recipe.

If you are grinding the meat yourself, you will find that it is easier to do when the meat is chilled or partially frozen. Since wild pork is a lean meat and will dry out easily, I usually buy "**Bacon Ends and Pieces**" from the store. This will add a nice smoked bacon taste to your meat along with a little fat to keep everything together. I usually grind at about a 20% ratio or less of it to my wild pork/venison. If you care to have more fat in your meat, the general rule is to use 50% commercial pork/beef to your other 50% game meat. You can purchase pork shoulders or beef briskets in the meat section of most stores fairly inexpensively.

If you do not have a meat grinder, most butchers will grind the meat for you for around .40 to .60 cents a pound. You can save money by boning out your meat so it is easy for your butcher to process. The main rule to follow is to never grind any meat you normally would not eat. After you have your ground pork or other meat, there are many things you can make with it. It can be substituted for many recipes calling for beef and other meats and is usually healthier for you as well.

How to Make Wild Pan Breakfast Sausage

Seasoning for Breakfast Sausage can be found at most supermarkets (meat section) or meat markets everywhere. Make sure you weigh your meat and have the correct ratios of seasoning so you don't over-do/under-do what you are making.

The seasoning can be added to pork that has already been ground but it is better to chunk up your meat in 1-2 inch slices, lay it out close together, and sprinkle it with the seasoning package and sage (optional), then grind it. You can use straight pork, venison/pork, or pork mixed with a little bacon. Experiment with what you like the best. The main thing is no to overcook your sausage if you

decide to keep it lean. You can always grind some commercial pork to add fat content but I personally prefer the less greasy texture of the finished product.

To see if your seasoning/meat ration is correct, fry up a little patty right there in your kitchen after you have a small first batch of seasoned pork through the grinder. If it needs more or less seasoning, you can always adjust it right away. If it needs a little heat or more flavor, add some sage. Pack your finished meat into 1 to 2 pound portions, wrap in freezer paper or freezer bags, and freeze.

How to Make Wild Link Sausage

Most sporting goods stores will have good link sausage kits. With these kits, you can select many different varieties of flavors such as Italian, Bratwurst, German, and so on. Casings can be purchased at most grocery stores in the meat section but most link sausage kits already have them included. Read the directions on your mix kit to make sure you get the right seasoning to meat ratio and weigh everything before you mix anything to make sure you have the correct proportions.

After you have your meat together, you can add the seasoning, then grind it, or grind it, then add the seasoning. You can buy stuffing horns for under \$50, sometimes for as little as \$25 if you look carefully. Another option is to use a mixer attachment grinder/stuffer. Either way you go you simply want to soak your casings in water for around 30 minutes until they get soft and pliable. Lubricate the end of your stuffer with some vegetable oil. Tie a square knot in the end of your casing and slide the open end all the way on the stuffer.

Start to fill your casings with meat from the stuffer. As you fill the casings, they will expand and the weight on the stuffed casings will pull away from the stuffer and allow fresh portions of the casing to get filled. After you get to the end of the casing link, you can tie another square knot at the end of the casing. Make sure not to overfill your casings or they will burst! Also, make sure not to get air pockets in the casings as you start to feed the meat from the stuffer. If you do have some air pockets after you are finished, make a small pin hole in the casing at the site of the air pocket to let the air out. Your link should still be fine after doing this.

Hog casings are long. You can cut the casing into shorter lengths or make one massive link and pinch and twist portions out of it to make smaller links. If you take the latter option, make sure you twist your casing in opposite directions so your sausage stays in links and does not become unraveled. Wrap serving portions in freezer bags or freezer paper (or both) and you are done. When you make your own link sausage you have the freedom to include whatever you want in seasoning or ingredients such as jalapeños, cheese, etc. Just make sure not to overcook whatever you make since the meat will be much leaner than what

you get in the store. These are just a few guidelines to get you started. Yes, it takes some time but it is well worth!

How to Make Whole Hog and Quarters

Whole Hog or Leg Quarters

The rule of doing BBQ with whole hogs or leg quarters is to go **slow and low**. You want to keep your pit/smoker temperature at around 275-300 degrees and smoke for about 5-6 hours on quarters or 8+ hours on a whole hog, depending on size. The internal safe temperature for pork is 165-170 degrees. You want to cook your meat until it falls off the bone and cooking too fast or hot will leave you with tough and chewy meat. You will also want to double wrap your meat in foil to keep your juices surrounding the meat.

Obviously, there are many different marinades and dry rubs available. You can also use an injector marinade and inject the meat with a food syringe/injector. This allows for an instant marinade and keeps the meat extremely moist as it cooks. Another idea that is cheap and easy is to buy a few bottles of Italian dressing and use it as a marinade. The oil in this dressing will keep the meat moist.

Now that we have a couple of marinade ideas, let's talk about a dry rub. Garlic powder, onion powder, cumin, paprika and some steak seasoning together as a dry rub. These ingredients all complement each other and work well for most meats.

While you are cooking, make sure you do not let the meat set right over the fire and that you baste your meat with BBQ sauce or another mop sauce to keep it from drying out. The trick with doing quarters and an entire hog at once is to keep the meat cooking evenly. The best way to do this with a whole hog is to split the pig vertically in the middle with a saw or camp axe so it will lay flat on your pit. Be careful when you do this to make sure you protect your backstraps and loins. After your pork is cooked, you can take it off the pit and let it cool for a few minutes. When it comes to cutting up the hog into serving pieces, think of carving a brisket or turkey because that is really what your end product will resemble.

BBQ Pork Ribs

The same basic rules as above apply to ribs. Trim the meat of undesirable fat and other portions you do not care to eat. Then you can cut the ribs in half

lengthwise to make two long racks of shorter ribs. These shorter ribs will be easier to eat as well as to store portions you do not eat right away. You definitely want to keep the meat moist as wild hog ribs are much leaner than commercial pork ribs and can dry out easily. I use an Italian dressing marinade along with the dry rub mentioned above and smoke the ribs in double foil for around 6 hours. Again, slow and low is the key to success here. Keep your temperature at around 275 degrees and you will have some great meat! If you by chance have leftovers, you can make some wonderful rib sandwiches. Just pull all of the meat off of the ribs, shred the meat with a fork or chop it up with a knife and mix in barbecue sauce.

How to Make Ham Jerky (Tasso)

Wild Hog can be made into delicious jerky along with deer and other wild meats! This is a spin off of the Cajun recipe called **Tasso**, which is basically a dried cut of pork. I, along with my friends have really enjoyed this treat and make tons of it. You can now buy ham jerky commercially from one company I know of but, like beef jerky, its expensive. Ham jerky is easy to make from wild pork and is safe to eat as long as it is smoked or cooked with heat for an internal temperature of 165-170 degrees. **You must only use wild pork for ham jerky.** Commercial pork usually has too much fat for it to work for jerky. Fat will turn jerky rancid quick so play it safe and hunt more wild pork! To prevent anything from spoiling, even with wild pork, you will notice later that mention to refrigerate or freeze ham jerky to keep it fresh.

The main way to make ham jerky it is to buy your desired flavor kit of jerky cure/seasoning. Most sporting goods stores will have these kits. I have tried a few brands and they all seem good to me. Mix the cure and seasoning by the directions in the kit.

Cut out jerky strips with sharp knife out of a shoulder or ham quarter. Cut the meat into strips no more than a quarter inch thick by about a half or three-quarters inch wide and six or eight inches long. Slice the meat across the grain like you were cutting a brisket or fajita meat. The meat will be easier to slice if it is partially frozen. Use a sharp knife and remember to remove all of the fat and white tissue from the meat before you go to the next step.

After this is done, lay out your meat on your countertop close together, but not overlapping, and shake your cure/seasoning mix liberally. Turn the slices over and repeat the same process. Since not every slice will be evenly coated and you will have some run off of cure/seasoning mix, take the strips and roll them around to soak up the excess mix and put them in a freezer/sandwich bag. Push

all of the air out the the bag and let it sit in the refrigerator for around 48 hours to marinate in the cure/seasoning.

Fire up your pit or smoker with some oak, hickory, or any other similar hardwood. If you are using a pit without a firebox, start your fire on one side and put your jerky on the other. You can lay the jerky slices on racks, straight on the grill surface, or on hooks/skewers. Cooking time for for this type of jerky runs about 1 1/2-2 hours. If you are using the BBQ pit, smoke your jerky with plenty of heat like you would for a slow BBQ. If you are doing your jerky in an oven, start your temperature at 250-275 degrees and stick a spatula or other object in the oven door to vent the oven as it cooks and starts to dehydrate the meat.

You must make sure to cook the meat to the internal temperature of 165-170 degrees before you are done so you must use heat, not a dehydrator.

You want your texture to be leathery and chewy but not burnt to a crisp like some of the jerky you buy at the store. For food safety sake and too keep your jerky tasting fresh, store your jerky in the fridge (short term/1-2 weeks) or freezer (long term). You want to keep ham jerky in this state to prevent the possibility of spoilage. It will usually disappear too quickly from the fridge to make it into the freezer anyway! If you are out for a couple of days on a weekend trip and want to bring some along to eat, it will do just fine at room temperature. This is a healthy snack that cost very little to make and is worth every ounce of effort when you are done!