**SALMON JERKY**

Makes about 12 ounces, about 15 strips

By Dennis W. Viau; modified from recipes found on the Internet.

Salmon Jerky is delicious and it has a flavor you never forget. My uncle Charlie (Charles DiCostanzo) was a biologist in Alaska and his research specialty was salmon. When I was a child he brought us a box of salmon jerky he’d made. I never forgot the flavor. Here it is many decades later and I finally reproduced the flavor from some recipes I found on the Internet, without using a smoker.

Salmon jerky is a healthy snack, being high in omega-3 fatty acid, which is believed by many to have many health benefits such as reducing blood levels of harmful cholesterol.

**Ingredients:**

½ cup (120ml) soy sauce* (see Notes at end)  
2 tablespoons brown sugar  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper  
1 teaspoon Wright’s liquid smoke, hickory flavor  
2 pounds (900g) salmon fillets, preferably with the skin still on, preferably wild rather than farmed

**Directions:**

To make the marinade, combine the soy sauce, sugar, pepper, and liquid smoke in a small saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring constantly until the sugar has thoroughly dissolved. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool.

Using a very sharp knife, cut the fillet lengthwise into long strips, each about ¼-inch (0.6cm) thick. Partially freezing the salmon makes this easier. (A dull knife will not cut through the skin properly.)

Place the strips in a one-gallon ziplog bag and add the cooled marinade. Seal the bag and let sit for 15 minutes to one hour. The longer the marinating time, the stronger the flavor. (I prefer 45 minutes.) Turn the bag over every 10 to 15 minutes to distribute the marinade and flavor the fish evenly. Discard the marinade after the fish is marinated.

Lay the strips on non-stick racks (or parchment paper) set over baking sheets. (You’ll probably need two baking sheets.) Arrange the strips so that they are not touching each other.

Heat the oven to 150°F (65°C) and place the fish inside. My oven only goes down to 170°F (77°C), which works fine. Allow to dry in the oven overnight. If it is not dry enough in the morning it can be set aside to air-dry an additional day or two. The strips should be quite dry and firm.

Store in an air tight jar or ziplock bag in the refrigerator. Other than the smoke in the marinade, there are no preservatives and therefore this fish might become moldy if not stored properly.

Peel the skin off before serving. This makes a healthy and satisfying snack.

The Step By Step guide begins on the following page.
The ingredients are simple enough. I don’t normally recommend any brand name, but research showed that most people preferred the flavor of Wright’s Liquid Smoke because it is made from actual wood smoke rather than artificial flavorings. It is concentrated; a little goes a long way.

Combine the marinade ingredients (soy sauce, brown sugar, pepper, and liquid smoke) in a saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. This takes only a minute or two because you only need to dissolve the sugar. Remove from the heat and set it aside to cool.
I’m using sockeye salmon. Coho works well too. As you can see here, my fillet has the skin on. This keeps the strips of salmon from breaking up as you work with it. I’ve made jerky with salmon that had the skin removed and the results were satisfactory. It simply requires that you handle it carefully.

Hopefully this will help you see how thinly I cut the strips. I did not partially freeze this fillet. I did, however, run my knife a couple times over a diamond hone to get it really, really sharp. The skin is tough and you need a really sharp knife to cut through it cleanly without tearing the fish.

Note: Slicing the fish this thin will yield very dry strips of jerky, almost crisp. If you prefer your jerky more chewy slice the strips thicker and they’ll retain more moisture.
Those who have marinated fish, chicken, etc., will recognize this. Put all the strips of salmon in a ziplock bag and pour in the marinade. Seal the bag and set aside. I turn the bag over every 10 minutes so that the fish marinates evenly. As I said above, I like to marinate it about 45 minutes.

Place a nonstick rack* on a cookie sheet (which I lined with foil for easier cleaning) and arrange the strips of fish on the rack, allowing space between the strips. Use parchment paper if you have it because the fish will be much easier to remove and cleanup will be even easier. (Parchment paper, or baking parchment, can usually be found in the grocery store aisle with the aluminum foil and plastic wrap.) Two sheets and racks will be necessary for 2 pounds of fish. Place in an oven set at 150°F (65°C) and allow to dry overnight. (As mentioned above, my oven's lowest setting is 170°F, which works fine.)

*I now place a sheet of parchment paper on top of the rack, which makes cleanup a lot easier. Even though the rack is nonstick I still need to soak it and scrub it with a brush to get it clean. With parchment paper I eliminate all the work. Just toss the paper in the recycle bin and you're done.
Here is the jerky, fresh from the oven. Allow to cool and then carefully remove the fish from the racks. Even though the racks are nonstick, the jerky will still stick. Parchment paper works best. If you don’t use parchment paper you’ll need to soak the racks before scrubbing them clean.

The jerky strips are rather long (these are about 14 inches (36 cm)). Cut them in half to store them. Peel the skin off before serving.

Place in an airtight container or ziplock bag for storage. Store in the refrigerator. You’ll note that this fish was never cooked. The drying process helps it keep safely. It should last a couple weeks in the refrigerator, if you can resist eating it all quickly.

This makes a great gift when you are invited to dinner. Salmon jerky makes a healthy snack because it is high in omega-3 fatty acid, an unsaturated fatty acid that has been shown to have many possible health benefits. When the local warehouse store has wild salmon, I make this often.

**Notes**

For variations in flavor you can try adding molasses, teriyaki sauce, Worcestershire sauce, or other flavorings.

I tried this recipe with other fish, such as fresh-caught tuna (not being a fan of tuna, I didn't like the flavor, but my friend did) and farmed steelhead trout (which was rather good).

As for the liquid smoke, Wright's is the most popular because of its flavor. In the local grocery store it can be found on the aisle where with the bottled marinades and barbecue sauces.