

"Lodgepole Canyon Links" **(Chuckwagon's Semi - Dry-Cured Venison Ranch Sausage)**

- 8 lbs. lean venison
- 1-1/2 lbs. lean pork
- 1/2 lb. pork backfat
- 6 tblspns. kosher salt
- 2 tblspns. rubbed sage
- 4 tspns. onion powder
- 1 tspn. ground nutmeg
- 2 tblspns. ground black pepper
- 8 tblspns. corn syrup solids
- 2 level tspns. Instacure #2
- 1 oz. powdered dextrose

After freezing your fanny off in the snow, carefully aim and shoot a 4-point buck whitetail mule deer, (our Rocky Mountain western measurement is four points on each side), field-dress and clean it, throw it over your saddle, lug it back to the ol' ranch house, hang it up, allow it to cool overnight, skin the dangd thing, then grind eight pounds of its best meat through a 3/8" plate.

Chop some creamy, "select" pork backfat into very small dice using a knife and then freeze it. Grind the pork and mix it with the venison. Add the remaining recipe ingredients to an ice water solution, distributing it well throughout the meat. Regrind the venison through a 1/8" plate with the ground pork. Add the frozen "small diced" back fat, and then mix the sausage well with your hands. Process the meat in small batches and never miss a chance to refrigerate it! Finally, stuff the sausage into larger hog casings or smaller casings of your choice and make links, hanging them to dry at room temperature for two hours.

Preheat your smokehouse to 120 degrees F. with dampers open, hang the sausage on smoke sticks, and dry them another hour. When the casings are completely dry to the touch, close the dampers to 1/4 open and apply heavy hickory smoke. Monitoring the smokehouse temperature carefully, raise the heat slowly, only five degrees every fifteen minutes or so, until the internal meat temperature reaches 152 degrees F. Next, shower the sausages in cold water, pat them dry, and then place them inside a drying area at room temperature with a relative humidity of 75% for twenty - four hours. Remove the sausage to a 38-degree F. refrigerator at 75% relative humidity for two weeks. Wipe off any mold that develops with a bit of vinegar on a paper towel. If you prepare this sausage carefully, its flavor will absolutely knock your socks off! If you don't have access to venison, don't give up. Try it with beef.

Best Wishes,
Chuckwagon