

## HOW I MAKE PEMMICAN

BY RON "SIGN TALKER" GARRITSON

This is a pretty simple recipe. It is a more contemporary way of making pemmican, but with pretty much the same end results. And rather tasty if I do say so myself.

The mix is 50 percent dried meat, NOT JERKY which is smoked and seasoned, real American Indian style plain dried meat, and 50 percent dried currant berries. I also use molasses to bind rather than suet as it not only adds to the flavor, but now days, we do not burn the kind of energy the original mountain men of old did.

The first thing I do is cut the meat, preferably buffalo or elk, into thin strips and either hang it up to dry in the window, (if my wife ain't home), or dry it in my Ronco dehydrator (if she is home). After the meat is dried to satisfaction, (drying time is usually about 24 hours either method), I then pulverize the meat in the blender (whether she's home or not) on puree until it is finely shredded.

Next, I dump the pulverized dried meat into a large mixing bowl containing an equal amount of dried currant berries, (sometimes I pick the currants from the bush, other times I harvest them from the health food store already dried and mixed with molasses) and mix thoroughly while adding the right amount of molasses for binding, until all is mixed equally well. I work the mixture with my hands as though I am kneading dough until all the ingredients are well mixed into a large glob.

I then start pulling off chunks from the large glob and roll them into balls with my hands and then flatten them until they are about the size of a silver dollar, (remember those?), after which I set these out on a tray to dry over night. Come morning the pemmican is dry enough to place into a light canvas bag for storage.

Pemmican will keep quite some time without spoiling. In fact, back in the 1970's, a large wheel of pemmican was found in a cave near Meteteetsee, Wyoming where it lay hidden for a hundred years, and after the outer crust was carved away, it was found to be still edible. My pemmican is good for about a year but only lasts a few months as it gets eaten on treks and at rendezvous. I once shared some of my pemmican with a Hidatsa woman from North Dakota and she was so impressed with the flavor that when she learned I was the one who made it, she wanted to take me with her back to her reservation and adopt me into her tribe.

You can use any berries or meat of your choosing, but I prefer buffalo or elk meat, and currant berries over any other as there are no seeds. DO NOT USE pork, bear or any birds for the meat as this will make you quite ill. Also be sure to trim as much of the fat off the meat so it doesn't go rancid on you.

Pemmican makes great trail food for hunting, trekking, primitive camps, etc., as it is light in weight and will keep in all seasons. You can mix it with other ingredients you might wish to cook in your boiler or eat it as is, but keep in mind that you do not want to eat a whole lot of it at one time as it is a dehydrated food and is subject to expand in the stomach. Usually one or two dollar size pieces will keep you going for quite a few hours while on the trail. In my boiler I break up around five pieces to add to the fixin's as this is usually not only supper, but is finished off as breakfast in the morning.

Well there you have it. My recipe for pemmican. Indulge and enjoy!

Respectfully,

YMHOS,

Ron "Sign Talker" Garritson

