

How to render lard, the easy way

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A hundred years ago lard reigned supreme. My great grandmother used lard to make everything from lye soap to her famous oatmeal chocolate cookies. Sometime during my grandmother's era lard fell from grace due to increasing health awareness and cholesterol concerns. By the 1980s my own mother had not only rejected lard, but all real fats including butter. I grew up "enjoying" the florescent glow of margarine.

Today lard is making a comeback. It is a superior fat for making just about everything: flaky pie crusts, melt-in-your-mouth biscuits and flour tortillas. I use it to make perfectly fried chicken, popcorn shrimp and crispy hot hushpuppies.

All about pork fat

You can render lard from any pork fat. The most pure pork fat is leaf fat. It produces pretty, pure white, flavorless lard. If you're a baker, I suggest rendering lard from leaf fat to avoid porky tasting pie crusts.

Fatback has a higher level of impurities and produces tinted lard. Lard from fatback requires better straining. It adds delicious flavor to refried beans and roasts.

How to render lard

You can render lard on the stovetop, in the oven or easily in your slow cooker.

Supplies

pork fat

large clear dish

cheesecloth

freezer jars.

1. Grind or chop fat into tiny pieces.
2. Place fat in the slow cooker on the low setting.
3. Watch fat melt into a translucent liquid lard.
4. When a sizable amount of liquid has accumulated in the bottom of the slow cooker, strain it through cheesecloth into a clear dish. Look for floaters. Restrain if necessary.
5. Allow rendered liquid to cool slightly. Pour into clean jars.
6. Return remaining fat to the slow cooker and continue to render lard, straining several times as fat cooks down. You are finished when fat stops producing liquid; this will take several hours and multiple strainings.

Storing lard

Although jars can be kept at room temperature, lard exposed to heat, light or oxygen will spoil. I keep one jar at room temperature for easy access and store the rest in the freezer. Frozen lard lasts indefinitely.

About the Author



Ivory Harlow lives and farms in Southern Ohio with her husband, pet turkey “Big Mama”, and other livestock. Be her farm friend at www.facebook.com/dickiebirdfarm or email farmer@dickiebirdfarm.com . **[More Stories by Ivory Harlow](#)**

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