



Corned Venison

By [Steve Jones](#) - [Outdoor Guide](#) Conservation Editor

Corned venison is delicious, and easy to make. We've all met people who claim not to like venison. This recipe will pass their test. I've never seen anyone fail to light up when they take a bite.

Corning a venison roast is no really no different from corning a beef brisket. First you cure it, then you cook it.

Corned beef is traditionally made from brisket. When it comes to deer, any cut will work, but a boneless roast from the hindquarter is best: top round, bottom round, eye of round, or sirloin (knuckle).

Loins (backstraps) or even steaks work too, except they fall apart during cooking. You can prevent that by securing them with twine or butcher's netting. Do that after the curing, before the cooking.

Corned loins and "eye of round" roasts are convenient to slice into medallions which are perfect for hors d'oeuvres. A plate of miniature open face reubens on slices of rye party loaf (miniature loaves) gets rave reviews.

Instructions:

1. Remove all bone, and trim well.
2. Using a non-reactive vessel such as glazed crockery, glass or food-grade plastic, submerge the meat in brine (ingredients below).
3. Keep cold. A normally adjusted refrigerator is perfect. Hold between 36 and 40 degrees. Do not try to do this in the garage, barn, root cellar, under the deck, or anyplace else you think is cool enough. The temperature will either be too warm or too cold or will fluctuate too much.
4. Stir the brine and re-arrange the meat daily, making sure all surfaces get exposed to the brine. This step, called "overhauling" for some reason, is more important than it sounds – don't skip it.
5. After 5-10 days (5 days for small thin roasts, up to 10 for large, thick roasts) remove and lightly rinse the meat. Brining too long is better than too short.
6. Place roasts in a large pot of water.
7. Optionally add a half pound of salt pork. Bacon works too but adds a smoky note that may not fit with corned meat.
8. Bring to a full boil, immediately reduce to a simmer.
9. Simmer very slow 2 ½ - 4 hours, covered. A water temp of 185F is perfect.
10. Remove the roasts. Serve either hot or cold, or [freeze](#) for later use. They freeze well. The roasts will have shrunk a lot. Don't worry, all the meat is still there!

Ingredients

Cure, some spices and other curing/sausage making supplies can be had from places like sausagemaker.com, butcher-packer.com, lemproducts.com or alliedkenco.com.

On-line sources offer bulk spices (such as pickling spice) cheaper, better and fresher than you can find it in the grocery store. At the store you might spend \$10 buying enough little jars of pickling spice to make a cup. But online you can get well over a pound for that. For online sources and more spice advice [click here](#).

For up to 7lbs (3175g) of boned, trimmed meat, All oz measures by weight, not liquid measure):

- 5 quarts chlorine-free water. Chlorine, present in some municipal water supplies, interferes with the curing process.
- 11 oz Salt and cure:

8 oz (227g) non-iodized salt (any non-iodized salt such as canning/pickling salt or kosher salt.) By measure, 3/4 cup for canning;pickling salt.	OR	11 oz (312g) Morton Tender Quick (cure is included), available in many grocery stores.
AND		By measure, 1 cup.
3 oz (85g) cure (Prague Powder #1, a.k.a. Instacure #1) By measure, 1/3 cup		

- 3 oz (85g) Powdered dextrose or table sugar. Dextrose has advantages, but feel free to substitute table sugar if you don't have dextrose handy.
 - By measure: If sugar, 1/3 cup. If powdered dextrose, slightly heaping 1/2 cup.
- 6 garlic cloves, crushed or diced. (More if you like. Put in twice that and it does not overpower the end result.). Can substitute 2 tsp granulated garlic, or 4 tsp garlic powder.
- 1 cup (4oz) pickling spice.
- 1/4 cup whole peppercorns
- 2 dozen whole cloveS
- 1 tbsp ground Allspice

You can adjust the recipe up or down to handle more or less meat, and play with the spices all you want. But the ratio between water, salt, cure and sugar is important. If you adjust one, adjust the others to keep the same ratio. And don't exceed the ratio of meat to liquid. Too much liquid is fine, too little is not.

Never reuse brine. Use it and toss it. Always start fresh.

Because venison has so little fat, it can be crumbly when slicing. A very sharp knife helps. Slice against the grain. If it crumbles too much slice a little thicker or sharpen that knife.

Due to its lean nature, corned venison can be quite dry compared to corned beef. Have moist condiments on hand when served. Mustard or creamed horseradish are excellent.

Corned meat [freezes](#) well, so feel free to make a bunch. I try to make a few large batches soon after the hunting season, so that I have a cache of roasts in the freezer. And corned roasts make great Christmas gifts! You might get the raised eyebrow the first year. Every year after that you'll get the big grin.

A wonderful way to enjoy this treat right away would be to serve a hot corned venison & cabbage dinner:

Corned Venison & Cabbage

- 1 fresh batch of corned venison, simmering on your stove, or already finished corned roasts -- gently re-heating or steaming so that they are ready when the other ingredients are finished.
- A fistful of pickling spice.
- several new potatoes or small potatoes.
- 1 or 2 heads of cabbage, cored and cut into quarters or eighths. (For a nice presentation, put a wooden food skewer through the sections to hold their shape through cooking.)
- Other veggies to taste, pearl onions and chopped carrots work well.

Cook the roasts following the instructions at the top of the article. Be aware, the veggies will take up some room, so be sure your pot is big enough.

Half an hour before finished crank the heat all the way up and toss in the potatoes, onions and carrots. As soon as it starts to boil drop the heat back to a simmer.

Fifteen minutes later (15 minutes to go) crank the heat up again and toss in the cabbage. Do the boil/simmer thing again.

Once the cabbage is done to your liking, about 15 minutes, remove from heat, dip out the vegetable goodies, meat and serve. Have some horseradish and yellow mustard ready. Irish soda bread (super simple to make!) is a great accompaniment. A riesling, maybe a wheat beer or hefeweizen with lemon would be icing on the cake. You'll swoon.

Other serving ideas? You can make Reuben sandwiches (yum!), plain venison & mustard sandwiches, whatever.

It's a cured meat product and keeps really well in the fridge. Tastes great hot or cold. Just be sure to make plenty, and if you actually have any leftovers, hide them well or you'll note a steady procession of feet padding to the refrigerator.

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