



**12 things you didn't know  
about JERKY  
(but probably should)**

# Jerky is Native American



The word “jerky” comes from *Quechua*, a Native American language spoken in the Andes Mountain regions of South America. *Quechua* was the language of the Incas.

Their word for a dried, salted meat was *Ch’arki*



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# Jerky Wasn't Always a Snack Food

Dried, salted meat wasn't a flavor choice; it was the best way to preserve meat before refrigeration.

The *Quechua* took advantage of the dry air and hot sun of the mountains to keep their meat from spoiling.



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# Dehydration is the Key



Mold and bacteria require moisture in order to thrive. By removing the moisture or water from meat, the bacterium that causes spoilage cannot grow.

So, jerky can last up to a couple of years without refrigeration.



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# Beef Wasn't the Original Flavor

Today, beef is the most common type of jerky, but nearly any meat can be dried and preserved.

Jerky is made from pork, turkey, chicken, bison, venison, elk, kangaroo and even fish.

*Ch'arki* was originally made from llama meat.



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# It Was the Original Travel Food



*Ch'arki* was popularized at Inns or *tampu* along the Inca Road System so that travelers could have something to eat.

It was really the first take-out food.



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# Jerky Fed an Army

When the Spaniards discovered *Ch'arki* after conquering the Incas in the 1500's, they quickly adopted it as their own. Traveling armies needed a high-protein food that was easy to carry.

The Hispanicized spellings became *charque*, *charqui*.

(Now you know where *Charqs* gets its name.)



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# Popularity Quickly Spread



Something this good couldn't be kept a secret for long.

As English settlers and American armies discovered this preservation method, *Ch'arki* spread across the continent.

The Anglicized name became the *Jerky* we know today.



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# Jerky is Really, Really Old

The Incas didn't invent Jerky; they're just credited with bringing it to the Western culture and giving us the word for it.

Drying meat is documented throughout recorded history and is perhaps the oldest known means of food preservation.



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# Jerky is a Global Delicacy



Jerky is popular in cultures across the globe and goes by many different names.

In Africa, dried meat is known as *biltong* or *qwant'a*. In Asia, it is known as *bakkwa* or *rougan*



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# Why Does Jerky Cost So Much?

Jerky loses up to 2/3 of its weight during the drying process. It can take up to 3 pounds of raw meat to make one pound of jerky.

Even with state-of-the-art equipment, the process to make jerky takes hours to complete.

Now you know why it is so expensive.



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# It Even Has Its Own Day



Jerky is so popular, it even has its own holiday. June 12 is National Jerky Day.

Many Jerky Companies celebrate by having a sale. Be sure to mark your calendars.



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# Jerky Has Been to Outer Space

Jerky is a healthy food that travels so well, it has even been to outer space.

Astronauts have been packing jerky on space flights since 1996.



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