

About RENDERING LARD IN YOUR KITCHEN OVEN, NO SMOKE.

February 11, 2014

Following the cooking mantra – low and slow – we rendered lard in the house this weekend.

It was easy and safe. Because we're cooking at low temperatures, the lard is less likely to cause hot oil burns. It also doesn't smoke or emit a strong smell at low temperatures.

In 8 hours, mostly oven time, we rendered 10 pounds of ground pork back fat into 8 pints of lard and 6 cups cracklings. I have a roomy oven and leveraged the opportunity to also slow bake butternut squash for soup. A perfect project for a sub-zero winter's day.

What you need:

- Ground lard (pork back fat)
- Roasting Pan
- Ladle or Measuring Cup
- Wide-Mouth Glass Jars with lids
- Fine Mesh Metal Strainer or Cheesecloth
- Canning Funnel

Here you go:

- 1) Set Oven to bake on lowest temperature. For my oven, that is 170 Fahrenheit.
- 2) Put thawed ground lard in roasting pan and cover with lid.
- 3) Every hour or two remove pan from oven and ladle pure lard from pan.
- 4) Strain Lard through cheesecloth or fine mesh strainer into wide-mouth jars. I prefer pints or even half-pints.

The first half of the lard you render will be extraordinarily clear and pure. It is absolutely ideal for quality baked goods.

- 5) Return pan to oven and repeat process ever 1-2 hours.

By the third, fourth or fifth time through the process there will be less pure lard to ladle and skim. You will now need to press lard from the cracklings. This produces nice lard, but not quite as pure.



Daughter Shannon rendered lard in her oven. She thinks she's the only woman in Lighthouse Point, Florida to do so. I bet she's right.

Repeat this processes until cracklings look more gold than pink.

6) OPTIONAL. This step uses high heat, is briefly stinky and possibly smoky. Possibly not more so than frying bacon or fish.

Render the last of the lard and crisp cracklings by removing lid from pan. Now, set oven to broil high. Watch closely, perhaps 5-15 minutes. The cracklings will toast and a bit more lard will render out. This last lard will be darker colored with strong pork undertones. Use as you would bacon drippings.

7) Cracklings and lard should be stored in freezer for extended periods of time, with a jar kept in the fridge for current use.

Learn to cook with cracklings. Fry Eggs, top a salad, jalapeno poppers.... get creative.

Ours are destined for a triple batch of Crackling Spice Cookies to be served at the next Snake River Farm winter customer day.