

# Biltong

A blend of the Dutch words bil (meat) and tong (strip), biltong is a snack of air-dried meat eaten across South Africa that is also often associated with the trekkers. They may have picked the idea up from indigenous groups like the Khoikhoi (who had been drying and preserving meat for some time) and added other ingredients, including vinegar and spices.

2 kg topside or silverside beef

¼ cup malt vinegar

2 tbsp coriander seeds

2 rounded tbsp salt

3 tsp coarsely ground black pepper

1 tbsp brown sugar

Cut the beef along the grain into 'tongues' about 2 cm thick and 20 cm long.

Place in a large non-metallic container and sprinkle evenly with the vinegar.

Leave to rest for about an hour.

Meanwhile, crush the coriander seeds with a mortar and pestle.

Mix the crushed coriander seeds with the salt, pepper and sugar.

Drain any excess liquid from the beef.

Coat the beef strips in the spice mix, ensuring each piece is evenly covered on both sides.

Cover and refrigerate for 12 hours.

Drain any liquid from the container and wipe any excess moisture from the beef with a paper towel.

Make a small hole at the top of each strip and insert plastic hooks.

Hang in a dry, sheltered place (away from flies) where there is good air circulation.

My dad hangs his biltong in the laundry with only the flyscreen door closed. Sometimes he also increases the 'breeze' by placing a small stand fan at the other end of the room.

An ideal temperature is about 20–30°C. So, winter is probably not the best time to make biltong, unless you have a special drying machine.

Leave the biltong to dry for about five days, or until it is hard.

Slice thinly and serve as a snack or a side dish.

