

Rendering Fat (Tallow & Lard)

Turn animal fat into a stable, long-lasting cooking fat

DIFFICULTY Easy
TYPE One-off batch technique
TIME 2–4 hours per batch



DIFFICULTY
Easy



TIME
2–4 hrs



COST
Low



BEST SEASON
At processing time



FREQUENCY
As fat becomes available from processing

01 Low and slow melts fat clean

Rendering is simply melting fat slowly at a low temperature to separate pure fat from connective tissue and impurities — done gently, the result is a clean, long-lasting, neutral-flavoured cooking fat.



02 What you'll need

- Raw fat trim (beef/sheep fat for tallow, pork fat for lard)
- A heavy-based pot or slow cooker
- A strainer or cheesecloth
- Clean jars for storage

03 Method

1. Cut fat into small, even pieces to render more evenly and quickly.
2. Melt slowly over low heat (or in a slow cooker), stirring occasionally.
3. Continue until solid bits (cracklings) separate from the clear liquid fat.
4. Strain through cheesecloth into clean jars while still liquid.
5. Cool completely, then store in a cool, dark place or refrigerate/freezer for longer storage.

04 Troubleshooting

- **Fat browns or smells burnt** — heat was too high; always render low and slow, never rushed.
- **Rendered fat has an off smell after storage** — inadequate straining left impurities behind, shortening shelf life; strain thoroughly through fine cloth.
- **Low yield** — some fat trim yields more than others; leaf fat (internal) typically renders cleaner and more abundantly than back fat.
- **Solidified fat has a grainy texture** — usually cosmetic rather than a problem, though very slow cooling can sometimes produce a smoother set.

05 Timing & maintenance

BEST TIME	Whenever fat trim becomes available from butchering.
DURATION	2–4 hours of mostly passive rendering time per batch.
MAINTENANCE	None beyond correct storage afterward.
SIGNS OF SUCCESS	Clear, clean fat with no lingering strong smell, setting to a smooth, pale solid when cooled.

06 Tips & variations

PAIRS WELL WITH

Butchering Pork

Butchering Lamb & Goat

COMMON MISTAKES

Rendering at too high a heat, browning or scorching the fat

Skipping thorough straining, leaving impurities that shorten shelf life

PRO TIP

Don't throw away the cracklings left after straining — well-drained and lightly salted, they're a genuinely good snack or salad topping.