

HOW TO RENDER BACON FAT

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Step-by-step, instructions teach you how to render bacon fat, a Southern cooks secret ingredient for great taste.



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Don't throw that bacon grease away. It's a great Southern seasoning.

I hope you're saving your bacon grease after you cook your bacon.

It's one of a Southern cooks favorites for seasoning pots of beans, greens, or other such things. It's great to fry eggs in, great to add in your cornbread, and great for just greasing up a pan before baking. It's got flavor!

Unlike plain lard or other cooking oils, bacon grease contains some of the flavor of the bacon from which it was rendered. It makes things you use it to cook with just taste that much better.

Mama use to keep a metal container with a lid on her stove top all the time. When she cooked bacon, she'd pour the leftover grease into that container and just let it sit on the stove until she needed it.

I keep mine in a refrigerator, mainly because I'm not using it as often as she did. I don't cook as much as she did. But, I still enjoy the flavor of it in the vegetables and other dishes that I cook.

It's especially good when you don't have a ham hock, hog jowl, or a piece of side meat to season your vegetables with. It's convenient to keep the rendered fat in the fridge until you need it.

Now, you probably already know how to cook bacon, so why did I even go to the trouble to add this to Taste of Southern? Mostly because there are some people that are still just doing away with that fat once they cook their bacon. I'd like to change your mind on that.

The most important thing to remember while rendering bacon down to get the fat, is to cook it low and slow. Set the heat to about Medium-Low, and let the bacon brown slowly and render out all of it's fat. You're melting down the white strips in the bacon that you're cooking, and saving it for seasoning.

My late wife would generally cook a breakfast of bacon, eggs, and grits for the family every Saturday morning when we weren't trying to rush out to work or school.

She always saved the bacon grease, and she always saved it in the little container that you'll see pictured below. I still do the same and I'm sure that little container has been in my refrigerator for well over 25 years. Smile.

So, if you're ready to cook up some bacon and save that fat, then let's get in the kitchen, and... Let's Get Cooking.



Render and Save Bacon Fat: You'll need some bacon.

Just about any smoked bacon will do. Sometimes it seems the cheapest bacon will have more fat which yields more bacon grease once the bacon is cooked down.



You don't have to, but I like to slice my pack in half. I can place the entire strip in the pan without the ends being folded up just so they will fit in the pan. Doesn't matter which way you do it, just do what works best for you. Smile.



Start out with a warm pan.

I like to use my cast iron skillet. Start out by placing the skillet over Medium-Low heat and let the pan warm up before adding the bacon slices. If you start out with a cold skillet, the bacon will likely stick.



Let the bacon cook until the bottom and edges start to brown. Turn the bacon slices over and let them brown on that side as well.

You want to cook this slowly to render the fat out. If you try to cook it too fast, the grease may burn and have a bad taste.

This takes about 8-10 minutes, but depends more on the temperature of the pan than anything else. Just keep a close eye on it, turn as needed, and don't let it burn.



Once it starts to cook and brown, it will also shrink up. Go ahead and add a couple of more slices. Remove the slices that have cooked, adding more bacon as you go. Keep the process going until you've cooked all of your bacon and rendered out the fat.



As you go, remove the slices that have cooked. Place them on a paper towel, or brown paper bag, to cool.

Just cook the bacon to the crispiness that you prefer. Some like it almost burned, the rest of us don't like it quite that browned. Smile.



When the bacon is cooked, carefully pour the remaining grease into a wide mouth container.

Mason jars are good for this, or a thicker plastic. The hot grease could melt a thinner plastic, so be sure it will hold the hot grease.

As mentioned, this container has been in use for saving bacon grease in my refrigerator for over 25 years. So far so good. Smile.

You can store it, covered, in the refrigerator for a couple of months.

Some folks like to strain the little bacon bits out of it, but I don't worry about those. However, if you do strain them out, the grease will store for up to a year in your fridge without going rancid tasting.

Let it cool a bit before covering it with a secure top and placing in the refrigerator for storage.



Enjoy!

Grab a couple of slices of bread and use the cooked bacon to make yourself a great Bacon, Lettuce and Tomato Sandwich. Just don't forget the Duke's Mayonnaise. Smile.

I don't have a printable recipe for this. It's pretty simple on it's own and super easy to do.

You'll love the added flavor it adds to your recipes and you'll see it used in many of the recipes that I've already posted here on Taste of Southern.