

# The Essentialist

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Lard and cracklings

## Rendering Animal Fat for Soapmaking

by Sheree Tompkins

(All photos by C. Haug)

### Equipment & Materials

- Raw animal fat such as suet or lard
- Crock pot
- Bowl
- Ladle, large spoon, or baster
- Mesh strainer
- Cheese cloth or flour sack
- Large pan of water (oversized, and suitable for heating on stove)
- Baking soda (for odor control)

### Method

1. In evening, put chunk(s) of fat in crock pot, and start it off on low. When it is heated, turn to 'keep warm' setting and let sit overnight.
2. In morning, scoop off the liquid fat with ladle or large spoon. You can use a baster as well, but it tends to spout hot oil everywhere, or get plugged with bits of fat or cracklings.
3. Keep the fat going until it becomes dry and there is no more oil seeping out.



Pork fat



4. Strain the remainder (liquid fat and cracklings; see photo, left) through a strainer lined with cheesecloth or a flour sack, to drain out the last bit of liquid fat.
5. Even though you strain it, there will still be bits of gunk in the fat. Place the bowl in the refrigerator to let it harden. Then dump it out of the bowl. The gunk will collect on the bottom of the cold, hard disc of fat. Scrape off the gunk.
6. Put disc of fat in oversized pan of water. Bring it to a boil so that it melts the fat. Put the whole pan in the refrigerator and chill again until fat becomes a hard disc again.
7. Remove disc of fat from the water. A lot of gunk will be in the bottom of the pan of water, but there will also be some on the bottom of the disc.

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8. Scrape off the gunk and put in a fresh pan of water and bring to a boil again to melt the fat; chill, scrape, and repeat process until no more gunk collects on the disc.
9. Do one final boil, adding some baking soda to the water to control the odor.
10. At this point you can pour it into molds for storing the fat (photo, right), or use it for projects like soap making or candle making.



If you plan to use it soon, store it in the fridge; otherwise, store it in the freezer wrapped in butcher paper (photo, left).



### **Alternate Method: Wet Rendering**

I've not used this method before, so I decided to give it a try a couple days before this presentation. I will report on results at the event.

Cat's note: I've read this method prevents scorching when you do it on stove top, but when you use a crock pot, there is little chance of scorching anyway. Also, I've read that adding water makes it stink quite a bit.

### **Additional Information**

- [The EssentialList: Fats for Soapmaking](#)
- [The EssentialList: Rendering Lard in a Crockpot: The Process](#)
- [The EssentialList: Rendering Lard – the Perfect \(& Original\) Shortening](#)