

TO ROAST VENISON

The original recipe by Gervase Markham appears in *The English Hus-wife* (1615). The recipe, with commentary, can be found in Keith Stavely and Kathleen Fitzgerald's *Northern Hospitality: Cooking By the Book in New England* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2011).

SERVES 6 to 8

Preheat oven to 400°F.

3½ pounds venison loin, neatly tied
½ pound leaf lard, cut into 5 long strips
21 whole cloves
1-1½ tablespoons drippings
½ cup red wine
1 teaspoon bread crumbs
1½ teaspoons cider vinegar
¼ teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon brown sugar
¼ teaspoon coarse sea salt

Also needed: a larding needle or a long, thin-bladed knife or metal skewer

Rinse the loin under cold running water and pat it dry.

Place a strip of the leaf lard in a larding needle, insert the needle halfway into the loin at one end, and remove the needle, leaving the strip of lard in the loin. (An alternative is to make a long thin cut in the meat with a sharp knife or metal skewer, and push the lard into the cut.) Repeat twice at the same end of the loin and twice more at the opposite end.

At varying intervals, push the sharp ends of the cloves into the loin.

Place the larded loin on a rack in a roasting pan and roast for 10 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 325° F and roast for an additional 15 minutes.

Remove the loin briefly from the oven and scrape the drippings into a heavy saucepan. Return the loin to the oven and roast for an additional 15 minutes, or until a meat thermometer reads 145° F.

During the final stages of roasting, add the remaining ingredients to the drippings in the saucepan and simmer, whisking until fully blended.

Cut the loin in ½-inch slices, and serve with the gravy.

Alternate method for larding: mash the lard into a paste and cover the loin with it.