

Days of Yesterdays, Esmont Community Center

Stories of the elders as told to Laura Piedmont, R.N. and Susan Hastings, R.N.

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Sausage Making

as described by Virginia Nelson

You start raising the hog 'til he's big and fat. Then, in the Fall, you chase him around the yard and catch him. Daddy killed him by cutting his throat. (I used to go hide for that part. The squealing was real bad.)

Once the hog's dead, they'd hang him up by his feet to drain all the blood out. Then they'd take all the insides out (that's for chitlins) and cut him up into hams, sides, and shoulders. They'd cut off the skin and dry it to eat later. All the good parts were salted down real good and hung in the smoke house to cure for about 6 weeks.

Once the big pieces were hung, they'd scrape all the lean meat out and cut it into small pieces real thin. And run it through a grinder and add in some fat—so it cooks good. We'd get sausage seasoning from the store and add in a little extra sage to make it taste better; salt and pepper too. Mix it up real good, work the seasonings in with your hands (kind of like making bread) and make it into cakes, like patties.

We'd cook it in a big frying pan over a medium heat, not too hot or it dries out. After it cooked real good, mama would put it in quart jars. Stack those cakes in a jar then pour in extra grease from the pan. After she got the top on real secure, she'd turn 'em upside down so the grease would run down and help make a good seal.

That sausage would last all the way to the next summer. So would the other big pieces. They'd take them down from the smoke house after about 6 weeks and wash 'em real good, get the salt off. Then they'd go back to hangin' in the smoke house 'til we'd need to eat 'em.