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## Springbuck and "Vetderms"

A cold front from the South Pole moves in over the Southern Cape, bringing with it the annual winter rains for that region. The front soon dissipates but the cold winds are pushed into the arid North Western regions of the Kalahari. They bring an age old message. It is time to hunt the wily springbuck!

Kalahari dunes run parallel from North to South and are approximately 250 meters apart. The depressions in between are called "strate" (streets) in Afrikaans and this is where the springbuck graze, sleek from the fat they accumulate to survive the approaching winter. Late autumn, at the end of May the day wakes to a cold wind blowing in from the South causing an unnameable restlessness to invade our souls. The women sense this restlessness and know that come Friday afternoon, their menfolk will quietly slip away. 31st May, a public holiday at the time, was a convenient excuse to create a long weekend for the first springbuck hunt of the season.

At the start of the hunt a shady Shepherds Tree is located from which the eviscerated carcasses can be suspended to cool off. Midday, after a hard morning's hunting, everybody gathers under this tree for a few cold beers and some inner sustenance. Now there are those who simply throw a few springbuck livers on a burning "kapokbos"<sup>(1)</sup>. The latter is a hardy desert shrub whose flowers create the impression of a light sprinkling of snow on the ground. The ashes of this desert plant provide a semblance of salt and spices on the liver. However, there are others who will be satisfied with nothing less than a Kalahari delicacy, the so-called "springbok vetderm". As already explained, in early winter springbuck are covered in fat, much of which is accumulated on the outside of the large intestine (colon), turning it into a much sought-after delicacy among Kalahari hunters. This is how it is done.

### " Vetderm"

Remove the last foot-and-a-half or so of the large intestine, called the "vetderm" (literally the fat intestine) and, holding it with one hand, strip out the dry dung pellets between thumb and forefinger of the other hand. Invert it with the help of a smooth stick or a finger and wash it for those that are finicky. Just remember, no sensible person wastes water in the Kalahari desert.

Remove the tough outside membranes of the livers and any large arterial walls with a sharp knife. Cut the livers into long, thin strips, approximately 10 mm. wide, add the diced onion, salt and spice to taste and start stuffing the "vetderm", keeping its fat covering on the inside. Remember to tie off both ends otherwise all your efforts will land in the fire. Rake some hot coals to one side and slowly grill the "vetderms" on a suitably raised grid, turning them frequently to prevent the delicate membranes of the intestines rupturing. The idea is to leach as much fat from the inside of the intestines as possible, leaving a crisp and juicy product. Patience is essential at this stage so time can be passed quenching thirsts, recalling events of the hunt and telling tall tales. The same recipe can be used for the "vetderm" of a gemsbuck, in which case it is called a "poffadder". Why? If you ever see a skinned puffadder, you will know why.

## Biltong



Biltong is a great South African delicacy, avidly sought after by young and old, rich and poor. Its origins are obscure but it is somewhat similar to American jerkey or the boucan of Caribbean seafarers, (hence their name "buccaneers"). Biltong was a required part of the dry rations that all Boer Commandos had to have in their saddlebags when summoned for military duty. It also accompanied hunters and explorers on their wanderings through the African veldt. When cut into thin strips, springbuck biltong dries very quickly, hence its popularity.

## Sosaties

Springbuck meat, especially that of a female or young animal, is imminently suitable for roasts, stews and what we South Africans call sosaties – a type of kebab. Here is how they are prepared.

### First Step: Marinade Mix (Recipe for 1,5 kg venison).

Ingredients:	125 ml Milk
	2 ml Ground black pepper
	4 Bruised leaves from a lemon tree
	1 Finely chopped onion
	15 ml Brown sugar
	10 ml Salt
	1 Large clove of Garlic, whole but bruised

| Method : |Rub inside of a dish of suitable size (preferably enamel) with garlic.| | Mix rest of ingredients with the meat and place in dish. Marinate overnight.|

### Second Step: Marinade Mix

Order some smoked, boned pork ribs from your butcher. The amount required by weight is at a ratio of 1 part pork rib for every two parts venison, therefore 750 grams of smoked rib. Cut both the venison and the smoked ribs into cubes, approximately 30 mm in size. Prepare the following marinade:

Ingredients:	4 medium sized onions, cut into quarters
	25 ml Cooking oil
	25 ml Brown sugar
	3 Bay leaves
	25 ml Curry powder
	125 ml Vinegar
	10 ml Grated orange peel
	50 ml Apricot jam
	250 ml Dried and chopped apricots
	375 ml Water
	15 ml Salt
	8 Black pepper corns

Method:	<p>Sauté onions in hot oil. Add rest of ingredients (except venison) and cook at medium heat for 10 - 15 minutes. Remove from stove and leave to cool. Place venison and smoked rib cubes in the enamel dish, cover with the marinade and leave for further 24 hours.</p> <p>Thread on wooden skewers, alternating two pieces of venison with one of smoked pork, interspersed with the large onion pieces. The sosaties can be kept frozen for reasonably long periods but are obviously best when eaten fresh.</p>
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Experiment with the balance between the sweet of the brown sugar, the sour of the apricots and the unique taste of the orange peel.

"Bon appetite"

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 [Aerva javanica](#)

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