5 Rocking Raw Easy-to-Make Doggy Dishes

When your four-legged furry best friend is a member of your family, you want to make sure he eats a healthy diet that gives him plenty of energy and a good chance at a nice long life. Feeding your dog well is one of the best preventative medicine investments you can make. If an apple a day keeps the doctor away for you, raw dog foods and treats can help your dog skip trips to the vet to treat a variety of ailments, such as bad breath, impacted anal glands, and benign tumors.

Why Raw Dog Foods

We've always been an animal-loving family and dogs have always been a big part of our lives. One of my favorite pups was Banjo, a sheltie mix who was my grandfather's shadow. Banjo was an ornery pup. He'd chew up a dozen pairs of shoes, but only the lefts of each pair. One of his favorite pranks was to drop his sopping wet tennis ball in the cat's food dish, much to her dismay. He had a goofy doggie grin that would melt your heart and an understanding far beyond what logic would tell you his doggy brain was capable of processing. He truly was an old soul in a furry body.

When my grandfather suddenly fell ill one spring, Banjo was by his side to offer continuous comfort. When it became evident that this spring would be my grandfather's last season on Earth, Banjo opened his doggie heart to the flood of friends and relatives who came to offer support and final words of goodbye. In the summer and fall that followed, Banjo became my Grandmother's sole comfort, serving as a living reminder of my grandfather and his loving, gentle spirit. They clung to each other, learning to adjust to the loss of the love of their lives.

Just a few weeks later, my grandmother called in an absolute panic. Banjo had been rushed to the vet with a mysterious illness, and his fate was uncertain. A short 48 hours later, he was gone from this world, despite the veterinarians' best efforts to save him. My grandmother was crushed and left mourning her husband and her furry best friend within a few short weeks each other. Like many of us, she asked what went wrong. She needed answers as to what caused this previously vibrant pup to suddenly grow gravely ill. The answer came three weeks later when a rash of pet deaths hit mainstream media. The cause was tainted high-end dog food that lead to fatal kidney and organ failure.

Eventually my grandmother adopted a new dog, but this time she made sure his food
was freshly prepared (but raw) with the family meals every day. No more poisonous dog foods or treats to threaten the life of our family's furry members. Raw dog food became the norm for our entire family.

**Raw Dog Food Basics**

Raw dog foods are meant to replicate what your dog would naturally eat if given free rein to pick and choose his own meals. Just like your own food cravings are often indicative of nutritional deficiencies in your diet, your dog knows instinctually what's best for him. These "organic" foods not only keep your dog from consuming unhealthy meat by-products and mystery toxins and additives, they help keep your dog's body and immune system healthy and functioning at an optimal level.

Your dog's ancestors, the wild wolf, may eat a can of store-bought dog food if they found it, but they wouldn't stop hunting and foraging for natural foods. Wild dogs, coyotes, and wolves all eat a variety of raw meats and foraged produce. Not only do they eat raw meat, but they also enjoy crunching up bones and consuming the fragments and marrow found inside, keeping their teeth and gums healthy. A raw diet also provides essential digestive enzymes, vitamins, and minerals your dog needs.

**Are Raw Foods Safe?**

Have you ever caught your dog drinking from the toilet? How about chewing on a rank piece of animal carcass or roadkill? Has he ever eaten his own (or some other dog's) droppings? Do you find him devouring the cat's treasures from the litter box? Your dog's digestive system is obviously much different than our own. The bacteria found in raw food is generally not a danger for dog.

While raw (uncooked) foods are generally safe, feeding your pup cooked meats and bones can be harmful. Be sure to research the nutritional requirements for your dog's breed and size before starting a raw diet. Portion size may have to be adjusted if your dog begins to gain too much weight or if he loses a few pounds after beginning raw dog foods. If you notice a change in your dog's coat, teeth, or happiness after going raw, consult your veterinarian. A diet change may be in order.

Before starting a raw food diet, it's best to not give your dog any food for 24 hours prior. Water is fine, but commercial dog food and table scraps (people food) should be avoided to let your dog's digestive system cleanse itself of commercial dog food. This will help prevent digestive upset when switching diets.
For your dog's safety, do not feed your dog:

- artificial sweeteners (Xylitol)
- chocolate
- grapes (raisins)
- macadamia nuts
- walnuts
- moldy foods
- mushrooms
- mustard seeds
- onions
- onion powder
- garlic (powdered, garlic salt, raw, cooked)
- yeast dough
- coffee grounds
- tea
- alcohol

### Daily Portion Guidelines for Dogs by Weight

Knowing how much to feed your pooch can be confusing. While no portion guide is definitive for every dog, the guide below serves as a starting point for feeding your dog appropriate portions. You can ease your dog into a normal feeding portion over the next week by slowly working up to the full portion size recommended according to your dog's weight. Do not mix commercial dog food and raw dog food together. This will almost certainly cause digestive upset for your dog.

The nutritional additives Lickochops and Dinovite are used to provide essential nutrients for your pup. If you select a raw food recipe where these supplements are already mixed in, please do not give your dog extra supplements.

- **Dogs 10 lbs. and less** - ½ cup raw dog food, ½ tsp Lickochops, ½ Tbs Dinovite
- **Dogs 11 lbs. to 20 lbs.** - 1 cup raw dog food, 1 tsp Lickochops, 1 Tbs Dinovite
- **Dogs 21 lbs. to 40 lbs.** - 2 cups raw dog food, 2 tsp Lickochops, 2 Tbs Dinovite
- **Dogs 41 lbs. to 60 lbs.** - 3 cups raw dog food, 3 tsp Lickochops, 3 Tbs Dinovite
- **Dogs 61 lbs and up** - 3 ½ to 4 cups raw dog food, 3 ½ tsp Lickochops, 3 ½ Tbs Dinovite
Recipe 1: Easy Doggy's Favorite Raw Dog Food

Ingredients:

3 lbs. minced chicken (raw, may substitute turkey)
4 cups white rice (must be white rice)
2 ½ cups frozen vegetable blend (carrots and peas are common doggy favorites, no garlic or onions, check the ingredients label)
6 ½ cups water

Directions:

1. Place vegetables, and rice into a large saucepan. Stir in water until mixed. Cook over medium-high heat until boiling, stirring constantly.
2. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed (about 25 min or follow directions on rice packaging). Cool completely.

Recipe 2: Easy as Pie Raw Dog Food

Ingredients:

10 lbs. raw ground beef
18 hardboiled eggs, in shells, cooled to room temperature
15 cups cooked and cooled white rice (not brown or long grain- these are harder to digest)
Lickochops omega fatty acid supplements, 1 eight ounce tube
Dinovite daily dog supplement, 2 ½ to 4 cups, according to weight chart above

Directions:
1. Crush hard boiled eggs, including shells, into small pieces.
2. Add cooled, cooked white rice.
3. Add Lickochops and Dinovite.
4. Add raw ground beef.
5. Mix completely
6. Can be stored in zip lock bags and frozen or stored fresh in the refrigerator. Roll into bite size or portion size balls for easy measuring and storing.

Recipe 3: Sick Day Doggie Soup

This recipe is used for days when your dog is feeling under the weather or when she eats something she shouldn't like rancid roadkill or the neighbor's trash.

Ingredients:

- 4 cups low sodium chicken broth
- 2 cups white rice
- 15 ounces green beans (canned or frozen)

Directions:

1. Heat chicken broth until boiling. Add rice. Cook according to package directions (about 20 minutes).
2. Cook green beans and add to rice mixture.
3. Cool to room temperature before serving. Store leftovers in tightly sealed container in refrigerator.

Recipe 4: Doggie Delight

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. raw meat of choice (beef and chicken are popular choices)
- 2 ounces organ meats and fat (can be liver, gizzards, necks, backs, feet, tails, tongue)
- 1 cup carrots, pureed
- 1 cup spinach, broccoli, or romaine lettuce, pureed
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar
1 Tbs. ground kelp (optional, but nutritious)  
½ cup plain yogurt  
3 eggs with shells finely ground  
¼ cup parsley

Directions:

Mix together ingredients and serve.

**Recipe 5: Momma's Homemade Puppy Chow**

Ingredients:

1 lb. ground turkey  
2 cups white rice, cooked, cooled  
1 tsp dried rosemary  
16 ounces frozen broccoli, carrots, and cauliflower (cooked)

Directions:

Mix together ingredients and serve at room temperature. Store leftovers in refrigerator.

Switching to raw dog food is an important decision for you and your furry best friend. Always consult your veterinarian before changing your dog's diet and monitor your dog closely for changes once a raw diet is started. Some dogs may require raw diets without rice, corn, or wheat. For the health of your dog, always provide a well balanced diet in moderate portion sizes according to his ideal weight range.

I hope your raw dog food experience is pleasant and that your pooch loves these recipes as much as mine do.