

Matie earns doctorate for biltong study

South Africa's first doctorate for studies in biltong goes to Maxine Jones, who likes hers "moist and fatty".



Meditations via [pixabay](#)

"Biltong isn't such a simple matter as we may think - there's science behind it," Jones told News24. "I like it moist and fatty," she said.

Jones, 27, has been on a year-long mission to develop a scientifically-proven recipe for making consistently delicious biltong. On Tuesday, she will achieve a first that is distinctly South African, when she receives her doctorate in Food Science from Stellenbosch University (SU).

Jones said her master's thesis focussed on the addition of rooibos tea extract to game droëwors to extend its shelf-life.

Standardised procedures

"It became evident to me, the lack of research that has been done on biltong, and this piqued my interest," she said. "I also became more aware of biltong's increasing popularity all over the world and, therefore, research on the topic would not only be interesting to academics, but also the industry."

Her research project focussed on the different aspects of biltong processing, such as the use of standardised drying procedures. She investigated the presence of different yeasts, mould, and even bacteria that often occur on biltong, and

that affect its shelf life.

"I wouldn't describe it as the perfect recipe. We used a combination of research on other dried meat products and what is commonly used in the industry and developed a recipe."

No guidelines

Jones said her research suggests that producers control the parameters in the biltong-making to be able to pinpoint weaknesses or strengths in their production process. "A standard for biltong will allow for more consistency in quality, which will ultimately lead to a happier consumer," she said.

Jones, currently a quality and food safety manager at a biltong factory, said biltong should be trademarked as uniquely South African.

"Processing guidelines should be implemented which include water activity and salt content limitations, as this will help with necessary documentation needed for exporting to some major international markets," she said. "There are currently no processing guidelines for biltong production in South Africa, and this leads to vast differences in the end product."

Jones said she wanted to do research and development while travelling to look into the development of food products across the world.

"With the increased popularity of biltong the research opportunities are vast, and this research is just the beginning of things to come," she said.

Source: News24

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