

## Training Treat Recommendations

### Why should I use treats in class?

At Marin Humane, we use a positive reinforcement training method in our training classes. Most dogs will work for food as it's one of the five survival needs. When a dog is food-motivated, it's easier for you to use their interest in food to get the dog's attention in a room full of strange people and unfamiliar dogs. It's also recommended that you bring your dog hungry to class so he is more willing to work for his food during class time.

### What treats are commonly used in class?

For training in general, we suggest you use small/smelly/soft treats. The reason behind this is: (1) Small size treat doesn't fill up your dog's belly quickly. (2) Smelly treat makes you very popular in class, and when you take out a stinky and smelly treat, all eyes will be on you. Your dog will think you are the coolest owner with a smelly treat, and (3) Soft texture helps the dog to swallow it fairly fast. This is important during practice because as your dog swallows the treat, he's ready to focus on you again to work for the next treat.

**Important note:** avoid crumbly treats. They are messy to handle and can spill on the floor easily. Your dog will take the time to clean it up rather than paying attention to you.

Hard treats are not as appealing and they fill up the belly quickly. Hard treats also take more time to chew which means less focus on you.

Some favorite treats used by our instructors:

*Happy Howie's*



*Natural Balance*



ZiwiPeak



Redbarn



Primal



PureBites



Wellness



**If I use Human food in training, will that teach my dog to beg at the table?**

No. Although you are giving human food such as string cheese, boiled beef cubes, meatballs, etc. to your dog in class, your dog is actually working for these food rewards. As long as you are not sharing your food from your table, your dog won't expect to get any just because he has had a taste of the real beef.

When your dog looks at you with those cute puppy eyes while you are eating your food, don't give in. Save some of the food before your meal or after, then either serve the food in your dog's food bowl or ask your dog to engage in a short training session to earn those tasty eats!

**What food is safe to give to my dog?**

There is quite a list of food that you can give to your dog as training treats. This is just a short list for your reference. When introducing a new food item, do it in small quantity and wait for 24 hours. If your dog's tummy doesn't agree with it, you'll see soft stool or even minor diarrhea. Stop giving that food item and if the condition doesn't improve after a couple of days, consult with your vet.

Be aware of the sodium content in the treats. If you are using food items such as lunch meat, processed meatballs, hot dogs, string cheese, etc. that have high sodium content, use it sparingly.

**Meat (no bone attached):** beef, chicken, turkey, pork, lamb, duck, fish, shrimp, eggs. Be aware some dogs may be allergic to chicken. Fish and pork can be greasy for dog's digestive track. Try it out in small quantity first.

**Vegetables:** green peas, carrots, broccoli, pumpkin, sweet potato, spinach zucchini, celery.

**Fruits:** apples, banana, blueberries, mango, watermelon, coconut, orange, kiwi, peach, pineapple.

**Other:** string cheese, low-fat yogurt, cream cheese, cottage cheese, oatmeal, peanut butter.

**What food is toxic that my dog should avoid?**

This is only a short general guide for most commonly available food items.

**Xylitol** – this is used in sugar-free food products. This is deadly to dog. Make sure you read the ingredient list and select food products that don't have this listed.

**Chocolate** – it contains caffeine-like stimulants known as methylxanthines. If ingested in large amount, it can cause vomiting, diarrhea, irregular heartbeat, seizure and even death.

**Grapes & raisins** – this is toxic and cause kidney failure in dogs.

**Onions** – another deadly food to dogs. It can cause damage to red blood cells.

**Avocado** – the leaves, fruit, seeds and bark contain a toxin called persin that can cause upset stomach and breathing difficulty.

**Nutmeg** – this can cause seizure in dogs. Avoid using pumpkin pie mixture and only get pure pumpkin puree if you are going for pumpkin baked goods.

**Alcohol** – a small amount can result in great intoxication for a dog which can lead to vomiting, seizure and possible death.

Further reading: <http://pawcastle.com/human-foods-dogs-cant-can-eat/>

### **Are you a Master Baker?**

If you'd like to bake for your dog, consider these easy recipes.

#### **Beefy Training Treat**

##### Ingredients:

- 1 pound of ground beef (or your choice of meats)
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup whole wheat flour or all-purpose flour (can sub with coconut flour for gluten-free)
- 1/3 cup oatmeal or oat bran
- ¼ cup parmesan cheese (optional)

##### Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 350F degrees
- Mix the meat and eggs in a large bowl
- Add the dry ingredients, mix to form a sticky ball
- Spread onto a greased cookie sheet and roll it out to ¼ inch thick
- Sprinkle with parmesan cheese (optional)
- Bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes or until top is brown
- Use pizza cutter to cut into squares after it is cooled
- Keep in zip-lock bag in batches and store in refrigerator (or freezer for later use)
- Cut into small bite sizes for training

##### Tips:

- You can precook the meat to get the excess grease out
- If your pup prefers just the protein, you can leave out the dry ingredients. But it may crumble easily after you cut into small pieces
- If you microwave the treat for 5-7 seconds, it'll be smellier and your dog thanks you for it

A quick meaty training treat I like to do is:

Get a pound of lean stew beef meat (or other lean meats such as turkey, chicken); boil them until it's cooked. Let it cool before you cut them into small bite size. Save the broth and add to your pup's kibbles as a special dinner, or use it to soften the kibbles then fill the Kong with it.



### Meat and Potatoes

Ingredients:

- 1 lb ground meat (lamb, beef, chicken, turkey, or liver)\*
- 1 large sweet potato (peeled, cooked and mashed)
- 1 large egg
- 5 tbs large flake rolled oats or 4 tbs ground flax seed meal
- Chicken or vegetable broth (optional, this is used for binding. If your “dough” is too sticky, skip this)

\*Note: Chicken and turkey are lower in fat and might be a better choice for an overweight dog.

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 400°.
- In a mixing bowl, add the ground meat with the rest of ingredients. Mix well.
- Add the broth as needed to soften the mixture. The consistency should be very thick. (You can also add in wheat flour to adjust the stickiness, and topped with Parmesan cheese).
- Pour into a greased 13 x 9 pan\*.
- Bake for 25 minutes or check with a tooth pick.
- Let cool completely on a wire rack before cutting. You can also break it apart with your hands.

Tips: you can also use a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Spread out the “dough” about 1” thickness. If there is a lot of grease, tilt the tray at an angle so the grease doesn’t get absorbed back into the mixture. Cut the sheet of “meat & potatoes” into squares and freeze them up. Defrost a few squares the night before for next day’s training need.

### Fishy Training Treat

Ingredients:

- 2 of 6-oz. canned in water tuna or salmon (or sub with 1 pound of ground meats)
- 3 eggs
- 1 1/4 cups whole wheat flour or all-purpose flour (can sub with coconut flour for gluten-free)
- 1/3 cup oatmeal or oat bran
- ¼ cup parmesan cheese (optional)

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees
- Drain tuna/salmon and place into a large bowl
- Mash it with a fork, add in the egg and mix well
- Add the dry ingredients, mix to form a sticky ball
- Spread onto a greased cookie sheet and roll it out to ¼ inch thick
- Sprinkle with parmesan cheese (optional)
- Bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes or until top is brown
- Use pizza cutter to cut into squares after it is cooled



- Store in refrigerator (freeze for later use)
- Cut into small bite sizes for training

Tips: if you microwave this for 5-7 seconds, it'll be smellier and your dog thanks you for it.

**Disclaimer:** This list is a general guideline of what foods are safe for dogs to consume. If in doubt, consult your veterinarian before you feed anything to your pet. Always get your dog checked for any food allergies.

### Training Resources:

Marin Humane **Behavior & Training** department conducts various training classes. Sign up on our [Behavior & Training](#) page for the next available class series.

We also provide **Dog Training Instructors** and **Consultants** available for private training or consultations (on-site or in-home) at 415.506.6280 or [OhBeHAVE@MarinHumane.org](mailto:OhBeHAVE@MarinHumane.org).

**Remember to license your dog (It's the LAW)!** If your dog gets lost, a license tag on your dog's collar is the fastest way to reunite you and your dog. Even if your dog is microchipped, a license tag is immediately visible and doesn't require a scanning device to read. For more information about licensing, microchipping, and other services provided by **Marin Humane**, visit us at [MarinHumane.org](http://MarinHumane.org) or stop by at 171 Bel Marin Keys Blvd, Novato, CA.

