



▶ NUTRITION & VERSATILITY
OF GROUND BEEF



▶ KEEPING YOUR GROUND BEEF
SAFE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER
PURCHASING



▶ RECIPES USING GROUND BEEF

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Choosing Ground Beef

What to Look For

Why should you choose ground beef for your family? The most important reasons might include economics, versatility and nutrition.

There are about 50 single nutrients that are essential to your health and no single food contains all of them. That's why dieticians and health providers recommend that we consume a wide variety of foods from several different levels of the USDA MyPlate every day.

Ground beef provides significant amounts of several important nutrients:

Protein – nutritionally complete protein containing all eight essential amino acids in ideal proportions to maintain tissues and for energy.

Phosphorus – for strong bone maintenance.

Iron – heme, the most usable form of iron, comprises 60% of the iron in beef.

Riboflavin & Thiamin – vitamins which act as part of co-enzymes to release energy from food.

Niacin – for healthy nerves.

Vitamin B6 – a co-enzyme for protein utilization.

Vitamin B12 – found only in animal foods. It prevents anemia.

Fats – for energy and to satisfy appetite.

Zinc – trace mineral as part of enzymes. It helps wounds to heal and enhances sense of taste.

KNOW THE TYPES

In meat counters, usual offerings are ground beef (or hamburger), ground chuck, and ground round steak.

Chopped sirloin is regularly stocked in meat counters that have enough demand for it. When all types are not already prepared, many times your butcher will grind steaks, roasts, or stew meat if you ask. However, fresh, high-quality ground beef or hamburger is just as good for most purposes as the more expensive types.

The meat labeling system used across the United States tells us the leanness of ground beef. Leanness refers to the ratio of fat to lean. The less fat, the leaner the beef. Ground beef can come from one of several muscles or primal cuts. It is more or less lean depending on where it comes from on the beef carcass.

Different ground beef dishes require different degrees of leanness. Three possible categories of ground beef and some dishes suited for each are:

- Ground Beef – Not Less Than 73% Lean. Good for dishes in which you drain the fat from the cooked meat, such as sloppy joes, chili and spaghetti sauce.
- Ground Beef – Not Less Than 80% Lean. Suitable for meatloaf, meatballs, casseroles and Salisbury steak.
- Ground Beef – Not Less Than 85% Lean. Good for combination dishes and low-calorie recipes.

Ground beef needs some fat mixed with the lean. Very lean ground beef makes a hard, dry beef patty and a compact tough meatloaf, which high fat beef shrinks a great deal during the cooking process.

When very low-fat content is required for special diets, texture may be improved by mixing fine dry

breadcrumbs with ground round steak before cooking.

KEEPING ITS QUALITY

Once you have bought quality ground beef, you need to take precautions to keep it top quality. Because ground beef is broken up into tiny particles, it loses quality much faster than steaks and roasts. To keep your ground beef top quality:

- Refrigerate ground beef as soon as possible once purchased.
- Use meat within a day or two. If you must keep ground beef longer, freeze it.
- Oven-cooking or slow cooking causes drying out of patties, so cook patties quickly.
- Handle hamburger meat as little as possible and be gentle. Mashing hamburger meat before or during cooking can cause dry, hard patties.
- Cook patties and hamburger steaks quickly and until pink has disappeared and juices run clear. They are safe when they reach 160°F in the center.
- Ground meat is more perishable than most foods. In the danger zone between 40° and 140°F, bacteria can multiply rapidly. Since you can't see, smell or taste bacteria, keep the product cold to keep it safe.

HANDLE IT SAFELY

- Choose ground meat packages that are cold and tightly wrapped. The meat surface exposed to air will be red; interior of fresh meat will be dark.
- Put refrigerated and frozen foods in your grocery cart last and make the grocery store your last stop before home.
- Pack perishables in an ice chest if it will take you more than an hour to get home.
- Place ground beef and ground poultry on the lowest shelf in the refrigerator or freezer immediately.
- Defrost frozen ground meats in the refrigerator – never at room temperature. If microwave defrosting, cook immediately.

STORE IT SAFELY

- Set your refrigerator at 39°F or colder and your freezer at 0°F or colder.
- Keep uncooked ground meat and ground poultry in the refrigerator; cook or freezer within 1 to 2 days.
- Use or freeze cooked meat and poultry stored in the refrigerator within 3 to 4 days.
- For best quality, store frozen raw ground meats no longer than 3 to 4 months; cooked frozen meat for no longer than 2 to 3 months.
- Cooking kills harmful bacteria. Be sure ground meat and ground poultry are cooked thoroughly to 160°F as tested by meat thermometer.

COOK IT SAFELY

- The center of patties and meatloaf should not be pink, and the juices should run clear.
- Crumbled ground meats should be cooked until no pink color remains.
- Ground meat patties and loaves are safe when they reach 160°F in the center.
- During broiling, grilling, or cooking on the stove, turn meats over at least once.
- When baking, set oven no lower than 325°F.
- If microwaving, cover meats. Midway through cooking, turn patties over and rotate the dish; rotate a meat loaf; and stir ground meats once or twice. Let microwaved meats stand to complete cooking process.
- After cooking, refrigerate leftovers immediately. Separate into small portions for fast cooling.
- To reheat all leftovers, cover and heat to 165°F or until hot and steaming throughout.

CLEAN, CLEAN, CLEAN

Keep EVERYTHING clean – hands, utensils, counters, cutting boards and sinks. That way, your food will stay as safe as possible.

- Always wash your hands thoroughly in hot soapy water before preparing foods and after handling raw meat.

RECIPES

- Don't let raw meat or poultry juices touch ready-to-eat foods either in the refrigerator or during preparation. This is called cross contamination and can make you very sick!
- Don't put cooked foods on the same plate that held raw meat.
- Wash utensils that have touched raw meat with hot, soapy water before using them for cooked meats.
- Wash counters, cutting boards and other surfaces that raw meats have touched. Don't forget to keep the inside of your refrigerator clean.



GUIDELINES

Cold Storage Times for Ground Beef

REFRIGERATOR (39°F or lower)

PRODUCT	DAYS
Uncooked ground beef (bulk or patties)	1 to 2 days
Cooked ground beef (hamburgers, meatloaf & dishes containing ground meats)	3 to 4 days

FREEZER (0°F or lower)

PRODUCT	MONTHS
Uncooked ground beef (bulk or patties)	3 to 4 months
Cooked ground beef (hamburgers, meatloaf & dishes containing ground meats)	2 to 3 months

INTERNAL TEMPERATURES for Safe Cooking

PRODUCT	TEMPERATURE
Cooked ground beef	160°F
All cooked leftovers, reheated	165°F

Stephanie's Barbeque Meatballs

This is my sister's recipe and it is so good. Your family is sure to love it as my family does.

- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- ½ cup milk
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 ½ tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ cup vinegar
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- ½ cup ketchup
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup onions, chopped
- ½ cup bell pepper, chopped

Moisten breadcrumbs with milk. Combine with ground beef, salt and pepper. Shape into 8 meatballs. Place into lightly greased baking dish. Combine remaining ingredients to make sauce. Pour around meatballs. Set baking dish in oven and bake at 375°F for 45 minutes.

Sloppy Joes

Made quickly from ingredients you have on hand; this will likely become a family favorite. I like mine on hoagie buns. I slice the top off, hollow out the shell, stuff with the sloppy joe meat, top with cheese and broil until cheese melts. It's also good with a mozzarella cheese slice in a hot dog bun, topped with the sloppy joe mix.

- 1-pound lean ground beef
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- ¼ cup chopped green bell pepper
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon prepared yellow mustard
- ½ - ¾ cup ketchup
- ¼ cup water
- 3 teaspoons brown sugar
- Salt and ground black pepper to taste

In a medium skillet over medium heat, brown the ground beef, onion, and green pepper; drain off liquids and discard. Stir in the garlic powder, mustard, ketchup, ¼ cup water and brown sugar; mix thoroughly. Reduce heat; simmer for 15 to 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Put on lightly toasted buns.

Nutritional Information Per Serving (not including bun):
189 calories, 9.4g fat, 11.2g carbohydrates, 15.1g protein, 50mg cholesterol, 416mg sodium

Meat and Cheese-Filled Empanadas

1 package (14 ounce) frozen puff pastry
12 ounces lean ground beef*
1 medium onion, chopped
1 medium green pepper, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 teaspoon paprika
½ teaspoon ground cumin
¼ teaspoon hot pepper flakes (optional)
½ cup chopped tomato
1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese

*can substitute with ground chicken or sausage

Thaw puff pastry according to package directions.

In a large skillet, combine the beef with onion, green pepper and garlic. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently to break up the clumps, until the onion and pepper are soft, and the meat no longer pink, about 8 to 10 minutes. Drain off any fat that accumulates. Add paprika, cumin, hot pepper flakes and chopped tomato and continue to cook, stirring, for another 4 or 5 minutes, to combine flavors. Let mixture cool for at least 15 minutes.

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Working with half the pastry at a time, roll it out to a 12-inch square. With a sharp knife or pizza wheel, cut pastry into quarters. In the center of each individual square, place about ¼ cup of the meat mixture, mounding it up into a neat pile away from the edges of the dough. On top of this, sprinkle about 1 tablespoon of the cheese. With a wet brush or fingers, wet the edges of the square of dough and

carefully fold in half diagonally, pressing the edges down firmly so that they stick. Seal shut by pressing with the tines of a fork. Place on a cookie sheet. Repeat with the remaining dough and filling.

Bake empanadas for 18 to 20 minutes or until puffed and lightly browned. Remove from oven and let cool slightly before serving.

Tasty Taco Rice Salad

1-pound lean ground beef, rinsed and drained
1 ½ cups uncooked instant brown rice
2 cups water
1 cup onion, chopped (about 1 medium)
1 tablespoon chili powder
3 cups tomatoes, chopped
1 seeded jalapeno, chopped fine
2 cups spinach or romaine lettuce
1 cup 2% fat shredded cheese

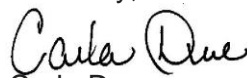
Cook ground meat in a large skillet until brown and internal temperature reaches 160°F. Drain off fat. Rinse meat with warm water to remove more fat.

Add rice, water, onion and chili powder to meat in the skillet. Cover, Simmer over low heat about 15 minutes to cook rice. Add tomatoes and jalapeno. Heat for 2-3 minutes. Place layers of spinach or romaine lettuce, rice mixture and cheese on plates. Serve immediately. Makes 8 (1 ½ cup) servings.

Nutritional Information Per ½ Cup: 220 calories, 9g fat (3.5g sat. fat, 0g trans-fat), 45mg cholesterol, 55mg sodium, 19g carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 3g sugars

If you have any questions about selecting or cooking ground beef, please feel free to call me at 870-779-3609 or email Cdue@uaex.edu.

Sincerely,



Carla Due
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