

Tips for Preparing Grassfed Beef

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Benefits of frozen meat

From Lynne Curry in her book, *Pure Beef*:

"Fresh meat has long been the standard, but the reality is frozen is better, especially with grassfed. It allows the ranchers to determine the best time of year to slaughter their animals. The beef can be aged, butchered, packaged and stored without any concerns about compromising the meat's quality or safety.

One meat scientist also mentioned that freezing can improve grassfed beef's tenderness because the ice crystals puncture the meat fibers, though it does purge additional water once thawed (FYI: the red liquid in the bag is not blood but water colored red from myoglobin, a protein pigment in muscles)."

Thawing frozen meat

One option is to cook frozen beef, but it takes about four to five times longer to cook and you lose control over the doneness of your meat. Cooking frozen beef also increases the potential for bacteria to grow when the beef is in the temperature range of 41- 140 degrees.

Beginning with most optimal, methods to thaw frozen meat include:

a) Refrigerator Defrosting - Time: Days

This is the safest, most foolproof and effortless way to defrost your meat. Put the packaged meat in a container to catch any drips and place it on the lowest shelf in the refrigerator with no other foods, raw or cooked, beneath it. Plan for a minimum of two days for 1 pound of ground beef and up to four days for a three-pound roast.

Whenever necessary, use the Cold-Water Bath method to complete defrosting.

b) Cold-Water Bath - Time: Hours

Submerging frozen beef in cold water is the method many restaurateurs use for quick defrosting. Place the meat in a container at least four times the size of the cut for good circulation. Fill the container with cool water (below 70 degrees) and change the water every 30-40 minutes. A pound of ground beef or steak will defrost within two hours. You can expedite the process by letting a cold trickle of cool water run over the meat.

c) Microwave - Time: Minutes

This is the riskiest defrosting method, to be reserved for when you're in a pinch. Wait until just before you are about to cook the meat, because the microwave can heat the meat to an unsafe temperature (above 40 degrees). Microwaves also heat the meat very unevenly and can even start to cook it, especially ground beef or the tips of steaks.

Larger pieces of meat over two pounds that are still frozen in the center fare best. Use short bursts of the defrost setting on your microwave, turn the meat frequently, and cook it immediately.

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Cooking

General

- Bring your grassfed meat to room temperature before cooking... do not cook it cold straight from a refrigerator.
- Always pre-heat your oven, pan or grill before cooking grass fed beef.
- Reduce the temperature of your grain fed beef recipes by 50 degrees. The cooking time will still be the same or slightly shorter even at the lower temperature. Watch your meat thermometer and don't overcook your meat. Use moisture from sauces to add to the tenderness when cooking your roast.
- Since grass fed beef is extremely low in fat, coat with virgin olive oil, truffle oil or a favorite light oil for flavor enhancement and easy browning. The oil will, also, prevent drying and sticking.
- The most common culprit for tough grassfed beef is overcooking. This beef is best served when cooked rare to medium rare. If you like well-done beef, then cook your grassfed beef at very low temperatures in a sauce to add moisture.

Steaks

- We highly recommend the [Jaccard meat tenderizer](#) which uses no chemicals. This tenderizer has won the prestigious Gold Medal presented by Chefs in America and the easiest way to produce a great meal. To use, place the meat on a wooden cutting board and gently press the device numerous times, covering the entire cut until you feel the texture is as you'd like it. Repeat on the other side if you feel it necessary.
- If you don't own a Jaccard meat tenderizer, we recommend marinating your beef before cooking especially lean cuts like NY Strip and Sirloin Steak. Choose a recipe that doesn't mask the delicate flavor of grass fed beef but enhances the moisture content.
- Grass fed beef has high protein and low fat levels, and the beef will usually require 30% less cooking time and will continue to cook when removed from heat. For this reason, remove the beef from your heat source 10 degrees before it reaches the desired temperature.
- Stove top cooking is great as you have more control over the temperature than on the grill. Cast iron skillets work great as you can sear the steak on the stove top (medium heat) and finish in the oven (400 degrees).
- When grilling, sear the meat quickly over a high heat on each side to seal in its natural juices and then reduce the heat to a medium or low to finish the cooking process.
- Never use a fork to turn your beef as precious juices will be lost. Always use tongs.
- You can use butter in the final minutes when the heat is low to carry the taste of fresh garlic through the meat just like steak chefs.
- Use a thermometer to test for doneness and watch the thermometer carefully. Since grass fed beef cooks so quickly, your beef can go from perfectly cooked to overcooked in less than a minute.
- Let the beef sit covered and in a warm place for 8 to 10 minutes after removing from heat to let the juices redistribute.

Other

- When roasting, sear the beef first to lock in the juices and then place in a pre-heated oven. Save your leftovers...roasted grassfed beef slices make great healthy luncheon meats with no additives or preservatives.
- When preparing hamburgers on the grill, use caramelized onions, olives or roasted peppers to add low fat moisture to the meat while cooking as some moisture is needed to compensate for the lack of fat in grassfed beef. Make sure you do not overcook your burgers...30% less cooking time is required.