

Buying, cooking and preparing red meat



As well as being enjoyable and offering a huge variety for different meal occasions, lean red meat can make an important nutritional contribution to a healthy balanced diet. To get the best out of red meat try following these tips.

Selecting and buying red meat

- Plan meals and make shopping lists so that you buy only what you need.
- Buy the leanest red meat you can afford (there's less waste).
- Cuts such as shin of beef, shoulder of lamb and pork belly are more economical. They tend to be tougher and require longer cooking times but when cooked slowly with vegetables and stock will give delicious results. These cuts are sometimes more fatty, however fat can be skimmed off during cooking.
- Where appropriate, choose trimmed, lean or extra lean varieties, e.g. lean mince. Even some of the tougher cuts of meat can be purchased trimmed of fat.
- Look out for easy-to-prepare options that are supplied with a sauce or are coated, rolled or stuffed.
- Check labels for portion sizes.
- Buying boneless steaks rather than chops, smaller portions per person are required avoiding paying for bone that has to be disposed of as plate waste.

Storage and preparation tips

- Check your fridge is operating at the correct temperature: between 0 and 4 degrees centigrade.
- Cover and store raw and cooked foods separately in the fridge; uncooked foods lower in the refrigerator than cooked ones to prevent drip contamination.
- Ensure that hands, surface and equipment are scrupulously clean before and after handling food and between handling raw and cooked foods.

- Keep a separate, hard, durable chopping board for preparing raw meats and clean thoroughly after preparing the meat.
- Cover meat when marinating and store in the fridge.
- Cut visible fat off meat before cooking.
- Defrost frozen foods thoroughly (unless otherwise stated) and do not re-freeze once thawed.

Cooking

- Grill or bake meat in preference to frying and avoid adding extra fat.
- If you have to fry, dry fry meats and discard any remaining fat before further cooking.
- Try making your own burgers and meat balls from lean minced meat
- Drain the fat from roast meats.
- Skim gravies and sauces to remove any excess fat.
- The addition of vegetables, beans or pulses to meat dishes is an economic and healthy way to add bulk to dishes.
- Ensure burgers and sausages are thoroughly cooked until the juices run clear and piping hot before serving.
- When roasting a stuffed joint remember to weigh the joint after stuffing, then calculate the cooking time.
- Food thermometers can be used to ensure internal food temperatures are sufficiently hot.
- When re-heating meat dishes ensure that the food is piping hot throughout.
- For recipes and a comprehensive cooking time guide visit www.meatmatters.com .

For more information please visit: www.meatandhealth.com