

Cooking Tips for Grass-fed Beef

Under the care of skilled pasture-based farmers, great genetics, expert management, and lush pasture combine to make grass-fed the most flavorful, healthful meat on the planet. A little extra care in the kitchen will ensure that you enjoy every bit of the rich flavor and natural goodness of high-quality, grass-fed beef.

Here are a few cooking tips that will give you the best flavor and texture:

Tip #1. Handle Your Meat Properly Before You Begin to Cook: Controlling cooking time ensures that you get the best flavor and texture out of any type of meat. Bring meat to room temperature before you begin to cook it and always preheat your oven, grill, or pan before you add the meat. Grass-fed beef is often flash frozen to ensure freshness and safety. When thawing your meat, never use a microwave oven. We recommend that you thaw your meat in the refrigerator. Or, if you need to thaw your meat more quickly, place the meat—in its vacuum-sealed bag—in a broad bowl in your sink and allow warm water to slowly drip over the meat. Turn the meat occasionally until thawed.

Tip #2. Choose the Right Cooking Method: The right cooking method brings out the best in every cut of meat. Dry heat causes meat to lose moisture and fat and is great for cooking tender cuts. Dry-cooking methods include broiling, stir-frying, sauteing, pan-frying, grilling, and roasting in an oven. Moist heat softens the meat and tenderizes tougher cuts. Pot roast is a good example of the type of

dish that results from cooking with moist heat. Cooking methods in this category include braising, stewing, and cooking in a crock-pot.

Tip #3. Don't Overcook: True beef lovers will tell you: Beef tastes best when cooked rare to medium rare. Grass-fed beef is lower in fat than grain-fed beef so it generally takes less time to cook. Whatever cooking method you use, don't rely solely on your recipe's cooking time. Instead, use a good meat thermometer to test for doneness. And remember, residual heat continues to cook meat after it is taken off the grill or out of the oven. Allow for this extra cooking by removing meat from the grill or oven when it is 5 to 10 degrees below the desired temperature. When roasting grass-fed beef, reduce the oven temperature by 50 degrees and begin checking for doneness at least 10 to 15 minutes before the time recommended in your recipe. If you like your beef well done, cook it at a very low temperature and consider cooking it in a sauce.

Tip #4. Take Steps to Add and Retain Moisture: When frying or sauteing grass-fed beef, thinly coat your pan with oil to prevent the meat from drying out and sticking to the pan. Marinating your beef before cooking also keeps the meat moist and tender. When turning meat during cooking, use tongs. Piercing the meat with a fork will cause precious juices to run out. Searing meat over a high heat before it is roasted or grilled helps to seal in moisture. Basting also keeps meat moist. When it is finished cooking, cover the meat and set it aside in a warm place for 8 to 10 minutes. This allows the juices to redistribute themselves.

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Look for *The Grassfed Gourmet Cookbook: Healthy Cooking and Good Living with Pasture-Raised Foods* (Eating Fresh Publications 2004) at bookstores or buy direct from Eating Fresh Publications, 877-921-4563, www.eatingfresh.com.