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VENISON ON THE MENU

Introduction

Each year some \$250,000 - \$300,000 is directly spent by hunters in the State of Colorado in the pursuit of big game; and each year they bag some 5,000,000 pounds of meat worth at least \$2,500,000 if it is properly prepared for human consumption.

Such an asset and valuation cannot be considered lightly, and the place of proper meat care and preparation in the maintaining of this valuation cannot be overemphasized.

This leaflet published by the Colorado A & M College is a step forward in the furtherance of this objective. It will prove of unlimited value to the hunter and his wife, who will welcome tested recipes for the good cooking of good game.

C. M. Feast, Director,
Colorado Game & Fish Dept.

Proper care of Wild Meat in the Field

Good wild meat begins with proper care of the carcass in the field. More big game meat is ruined for human consumption through souring than from all other causes. Souring is caused by the growth of bacteria which are present in the air and intestines at all times. This growth is stimulated by the body heat of the carcass and the

This preliminary publication follows three months of recipe-testing with deer and elk meat, by members of the Home Economics Section of Colorado A & M College. The authors are indebted to the Colorado Game and Fish Department, which provided deer and elk meat from confiscated illegal kills and animals killed to end damage upon lands of complaining property owners. They also wish to acknowledge the assistance of faculty members and students in judging and in preparing recipes.

bacteria require but a very short time to become active.

Quick cooling of the carcass is the first essential. Even in the coldest weather the animal should be dressed immediately, the body cavity propped open, and the carcass removed from the ground if possible. In the warmest weather souring can be prevented by immediate dressing, skinning and quartering of the carcass. The quarters should be hung in the shade in a good circulation of air. Cheesecloth or packing house tubing may be used to keep flies away. Equal care should be taken in transporting meat home from camp. Keep it away from the heat of your automobile motor.

The best cook in the world cannot make a first class meat dish from the flesh of a freshly killed carcass. Certain chemical reactions that require time are necessary in the production of first class meat. Slaughter houses do not put domestic meat on the market until it has hung in a temperature above freezing for at least two or three weeks. The carcasses of big game animals should be aged similarly before being used. To put a carcass immediately into "deep freeze" is not a good policy. The frontiersmen who lived on wild game used a screened-in meat "safe", located in the shade and exposed to the open air. A hard "casing" will form on the outside of the meat, but there is still no better way of assuring tender, well flavored meat from wild game animals. After two or three weeks of this treatment the meat may be put in the locker plant for extended storage.

C. E. Hagie, Educational Manager,
Colorado Game & Fish Dept.

Home Care of Game

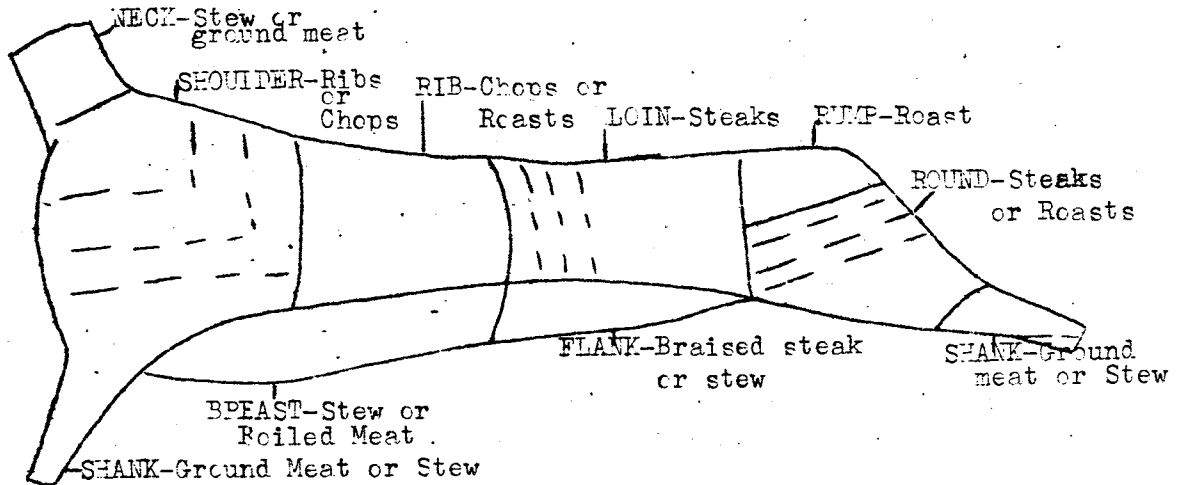
Game properly cared for in the field and suitably skinned is (1) cut into convenient pieces, (2) packaged, and (3) safely stored to prepare it for satisfactory home cooking.

Cutting is not a haphazard operation. To do it most easily hang the carcass by the hocks or hock tendons. Split lengthwise along the backbone, from tail to neck; sawing with a meat or carpenter's saw, or chopping with a cleaver or handaxe. Keep halves

well spread while splitting. Cut between the last two ribs and through the backbone to divide halves into quarters.

Badly shot portions should be cut out. If they appear distasteful, use for dog or cat meat. If the pieces are merely blood-shot, cut into small chunks, score, soak overnight in salt water, and use in stews, hamburger or mincemeat.

Clear portions may be cut into steaks, roasts and stew meat in proportions desired. Many frigid-locker stores have power saws and capable meat cutters who cut and wrap meat for a few cents a pound. Some hunters cut their own roasts and have steaks or chops cut by expert meat cutters. Cuts and their uses are indicated upon the accompanying chart:



Major cuts are made along solid lines
Smaller cuts are made along broken lines

If it is undesirable to cut the entire carcass at once, cut the meat into quarters or other major chunks, wrap and freeze it, and make smaller cuts later. Meat tends to dry less if kept in large pieces, but it is more convenient for the cook if the meat is cut and wrapped into packages of steaks, chops and roasts large enough for each meal -- with each package clearly labelled. Wrapping should be with moisture-vapor-proof paper.

Storage methods vary. Meat hung on the north side of the house will stay frozen in colder portions of Colorado. Frigid lockers and home deep-freeze units duplicate this service in warmer zones. Some can venison in accordance with recommended meat canning procedures.

Distinctive Qualities of Game

To obtain venison or elk roasts which result in a chorus of compliments from satisfied diners, requires consideration of the differences between game and domestic meat. Recognize these differences at the outset and take advantage of the unique qualities of game by using proper cooking methods.

Things you may notice first are the thin fat covering, the dark color of game, and the tendency of meat in the fresh or thawed state to drip. These are natural characteristics. Off flavors are often traced to the fat, and it is usually wise to remove even the small amount present and substitute beef or pork fat if fat is needed. Since game tends to be dry, it may be larded with fat, or bacon may be placed on top of roasts to supplement the natural juice of the meat. The fat which is present solidifies easily and for that reason meats are best when served piping hot.

Meat from elk and deer has a characteristic flavor just as meat from pork or beef. A distinction should be made between the natural flavor, often described as gamey, and flavor or odor resulting from standing or lack of care. The flavor of elk is very similar to that of beef, while that of deer is more pronounced. Well cared for meat has a delightful flavor which can be protected or masked by cooking as desired. If you desire to submerge the flavor somewhat choose a highly seasoned sauce, which will overcome any gamey flavor.

The recipes which follow have been chosen by a variety of food judges for their palatability and general appeal. Mild and spicy recipes are included to suit a variety of tastes.

IDEAS FOR APPETIZING DISHES

(Turn to following pages for specific directions)

		See Page
A. BROILED STEAKS	Oven or pan-broiled with salt and butter. Brushed with steak sauce and broiled. Served with highly seasoned sauce.	6
B. SAUTEED STEAKS	Chicken-fried (meat floured, pounded and fried) Strips dipped in egg and crumbs, then fried crisp.	6
C. OVEN ROASTS	Rib roasts - larded, little seasoning. Shoulder roasts spread with mustard. Roasts spread with other seasoning.	6
D. POT ROASTS	Plain with vegetables. Seasoned with tomato, garlic and spices. Marinated roasts.	7
E. SWISS STEAKS	Plain - seasoned only with salt. Spanish steak. With barbeque or highly seasoned sauce.	8
F. STEWS	Braised short ribs. Shank stew. English brown stew.	9
G. GROUND MEAT	Hamburgers • plain or with seasoned sauce. Meat loaf. Chili.	10
H. LEFT OVER MEAT	Meat shortcake. Curried Venison. Minced meat.	11

RECIPES AND DIRECTIONS

Broiled Steaks

Oven broiling - Choose medium to thick steaks from rib or loin. Wipe with a damp cloth and place in a pre-heated broiler set at 350° F. The broiler or oven door should be left slightly ajar during broiling. When brown on one side salt and turn. The time required for broiling will depend on the stage of doneness desired and the size of the steak. A 1-inch deer sirloin steak will require about 15-20 minutes to reach the medium done stage. Elk steaks will take a little longer than the corresponding beef steak. Many people prefer medium or well done game, rather than rare, because after longer cooking any unusual aroma will have disappeared.

Pan broiling - Place meat in a pre-heated skillet that is just lightly greased. Cook over a medium flame until it has reached the desired stage of doneness. Turn and salt when half done.

*Sautéed Steaks

For those who like well-done meat with no suggestion of game flavor, chicken fried steaks are suggested. Dip meat in seasoned flour and pound thin, then fry crisp. The meat may also be cut in small strips, dipped in egg and cracker crumbs and then fried.

Oven Roasts

Rub salt into surface of roast and place in an uncovered pan. Insert a meat thermometer into the center of the largest muscle, being careful to avoid contact with bone or fat. Roast at a constant temperature of 300-350° F. for 25-30 minutes for each pound. All elk and deer has a dark surface when roasted and may seem done before it actually is. Since game browns so readily, searing is not necessary. However, if a seared flavor is desired it is best to sear the roast at the end of the cooking period. About 30 minutes before removing from the oven turn heat to 450° F. for searing.

* Sauté - To fry in a small amount of fat.

Tomato Pot Roast

2½ lb. chuck or rump of elk or deer	2 c. tomato juice
1 tt. lard	4 medium potatoes
1 clove garlic	6 carrots
1 tt. salt	

Brown meat slowly in lard. When well-browned add tomato juice, salt and garlic. Cover lightly and simmer until tender, about 3½ hours. Add vegetables 45 minutes before done.

Game Sauerbraten

3 lbs. elk or deer meat	6 whole cloves
2½ c. vinegar	3 bay leaves
3 c. water	6 whole black peppers
2 medium sized onions, sliced	1½ t. salt
1/2 lemon, sliced	

Place meat in a large bowl; add remaining ingredients. Let meat stand 48 hours, turning occasionally. Remove meat, brown in hot fat. Remove meat and add 1½ tt. flour, brown and add 2 c. vinegar mixture and cook until mixture thickens. Add meat and simmer for two hours. Remove, slice meat and pour gravy over the meat.

Spanish Steak

2 lb. chuck steak (deer or elk)	1 green pepper, sliced
Flour for dredging.	2½ t. salt
4 tt. lard or dripping	1/2 t. pepper
2 onions, sliced	1 No. 2 can tomatoes

Have chuck steak cut thick. Dredge with flour and brown in lard. Add onions, green pepper, seasonings and tomatoes. Cover closely and simmer approximately 3 hours, or until tender. Serves 4-6.

Venison Barbecue

1 c. catsup	1 tb. butter
1 tb. salt	1/8 t. cinnamon
2 tb. Worcestershire sauce	3 slices lemon
1/4 c. vinegar	1 onion, sliced thin
	1/8 t. allspice

Sear 3 lbs. of venison in frying pan. Mix above ingredients in saucepan and bring mixture to boil, stirring to avoid burning, and simmer 10 minutes. Cover venison with the sauce and roast in moderate oven (350° F). Cook 1½ to 2 hrs. - turning occasionally.

Venison Roll-Ups

2 lbs. round steak	4 medium-sized carrots
Salt	Flour
Pepper	Shortening
1/2 lb. pork sausage meat	

Pound thinly cut steak with saucer edge or meat hammer. Cut into 4-inch squares. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and spread with sausage meat. Scrape carrots and quarter lengthwise. Place several strips on each piece of meat. Roll and tie with string or fasten with toothpicks or skewers. Flour lightly. Brown in hot shortening. Partly cover with water, cover pan, and cook in moderate oven (350° F) until tender - 1½ to 2 hours. Serves 6.

English Brown Stew

1 lb. elk or venison, cut in inch cubes	1/2 tb. Worcestershire sauce
2½ c. boiling water	1/4 c. tomato juice
2 tb. chopped onion	1/4 to 1 c. pearl onions
1/2 clove garlic	1/4 to 1/2 c. diced celery
1½ t. salt	1/2 c. sliced carrots
1/2 t. paprika	1 c. cubed potatoes
1 t. sugar	(Very last 4 ingredients
1/2 tb. lemon juice or 1 tb. dry wine	to suit individual taste)

Flour meat and brown well in a heavy pan, using enough fat to cover the bottom of the pan. Add boiling water, chopped onion, garlic, seasonings, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce and tomato juice. Cover tightly and simmer 2 hours, adding more water if needed. Add vegetables and continue cooking until vegetables are done. Pour off juices and thicken with a flour-water paste. Add gravy to meat and vegetables. Serves 6.

Shank Stew

2 lbs. elk shank (cut in 2" pieces)	1 3/4 c. water
2 tb. lard	1 c. sliced onion
2 t. salt	3/4 c. diced celery
1 c. canned tomatoes	

Brown meat in lard. Add tomatoes, water, salt, sliced onions and celery. Cover and cook slowly or bake in a moderate oven (350° F) about 2 1/2 hours.

Brown Soup Stock

3 lbs. bone and meat of elk or deer	Fat for browning
3 qts. cold water	1 tb. salt
1/2 c. celery	2 sprigs parsley
1/2 c. carrots	5 whole cloves
1/2 c. onions	1 - 2 bay leaves

Cut meat from bones and brown well. Cover bones and browned meat with water. Add remaining ingredients, cover and simmer for 3 1/2 to 4 hours. Strain, chill, remove fat and strain again. (Other seasonings such as thyme or marjoram may be added if desired).

Meat Loaf with Chili Sauce

2 lbs. ground elk or venison	1 tb. salt
4 slices fresh bread	1/4 t. pepper
1/2 c. water	2 eggs
1 medium onion	1 c. chili sauce

Soften bread in water and add remaining ingredients. Mix well, pack in pan and cover with chili sauce. Bake at 375° F. for 45 min.

Venison Shortcake

1 slice bacon, diced	1/2 t. uncreamed mustard
1/4 c. onions, sliced	1/8 c. tomato catsup
1 lb. lean deer or elk, ground	2 c. flour
1 t. salt	3 t. baking powder
1/4 t. pepper	1 t. salt
2 tb. flour	4 tb. shortening
1 1/2 c. water	2/3 - 3/4 c. milk

Saute bacon and onions until slightly browned. Add meat, salt, pepper, and cook until browned. Add flour and blend. Add water, mustard, and catsup. Bring to a brisk boil, stirring constantly. Sift flour, baking powder and salt together twice. Cut in shortening. Add milk gradually, mixing to soft dough. Turn out on floured board and knead slightly. Roll 1/4 inch thick and cut with floured 3" biscuit cutter. Place half of biscuits on baking sheets, brush with melted butter and place remaining biscuits on top. Bake in hot oven (425° F) 12 to 15 minutes. To serve, split shortcakes and pile meat mixture between halves. Serves 6.

Chili

1 #2 can kidney beans	2 1/2 t. salt
1 large onion, sliced	1/8 t. paprika
1 green pepper, chopped	1/8 t. cayenne
1 lb. ground deer or elk meat	3 whole cloves
3 tb. fat	1 bay leaf
1 #2 1/2 can tomatoes	1 - 2 tb. chili powder

Brown onion, green pepper, and meat in hot fat. Add tomatoes and seasonings. Simmer 2 hours, adding water if necessary. About 10 minutes before serving add the beans and heat thoroughly. Serves 6 - 8

Curried Game

3 lbs. cooked elk or deer meat	1/4 t. ginger
2 t. salt	1/4 t. tabasco sauce
1 1/2 medium onions, minced	1/2 tb. Worcestershire sauce
3 stalks celery, chopped	1/8 c. flour
2 apples, minced	1/4 c. cold water
1/4 c. salad oil or shortening	1 c. heavy cream
2 - 3 t. curry powder	1 egg yolk, well beaten
1/8 t. pepper	3 c. boiled rice
2 c. stock or bouillon	

Saute onions, celery and apples in oil until slightly brown. Stir in curry powder and simmer 5 minutes. Add remaining seasonings and stock and cook 20 minutes. Stir in flour mixed with water and cook 5 minutes, stirring until thickened. Remove from heat and allow to stand one hour. Reheat and add cooked meat, cream and egg yolk just before serving. Heat to boiling point, stirring constantly. Serve on rice.

Mincemeat

2 lbs. cooked venison	1/2 t. cloves
4 lbs. apples	1/2 t. nutmeg
2 lbs. currants & raisins mixed	1/2 t. allspice
3/4 lb. suet	2 t. salt
2 c. brown sugar	2 qts. apple cider
2 c. white sugar	1 c. molasses
1 1/2 t. cinnamon	2 tb. lemon juice

Grind venison, apples and suet. Add all ingredients except lemon juice. Simmer 1 1/2 hours, or until thick. Remove from heat and add lemon juice. This may be canned and will keep indefinitely. Yields 3 1/2 to 4 qts.

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A more detailed bulletin is planned for future publication when time and printing materials are available. Through this brief publication and future studies, the cooperating agencies hope to help you enjoy and profit from Colorado's lawfully available big game.