

May: National Beef Month

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With thought and planning, beef can make meal times tasty and healthy. Lean beef is a naturally nutrient-rich source of several essential vitamins and minerals. May is beef month. Beef not only helps you meet nutrient needs, but also fuels



Nebraska's economy. Nebraska produces more beef per square mile than any other state. By grazing land unsuitable for farming, more people are fed than would be possible

otherwise. Over 95 percent of ranches and farms are family operations, which provide habitat for 75 percent of America's wildlife. A three-ounce serving of lean beef is an excellent source of protein, zinc, vitamin B12, selenium and phosphorus; and a good source of niacin, vitamin B6, iron and riboflavin. Check out the following tips and food safety recommendations for making beef a healthy part of your eating plan.

Tips for Making Beef a Healthy Part of Meals:

Lean beef. There are 29 cuts considered to be lean. According to government guidelines, a serving is "extra lean" if it has less than 5 grams total fat, 2 grams or less saturated fat and less than 95 milligrams cholesterol per 3.5-ounce serving. A serving is "lean" if it has less than 10 grams total fat, 4.5 grams or less saturated fat and less than 95 milligrams cholesterol per 3.5-ounce serving.



Examples include eye round, top round, round tip, bottom round, sirloin, top loin, tenderloin, and flank. These may be cut as roasts or steaks. For ground beef, choose 95-percent lean ground beef most often.

Portion sizes. Choosing a lean cut and enjoying proper portions makes beef a great addition to a healthy eating plan. Start with a 3-ounce serving of lean beef (about the size of a deck of cards) and round it out with brightly colored vegetables, fruits and whole grains.



Shopping for beef. It's important to remember food safety guidelines when shopping for beef.



Remember to check the "sell by" date to make sure it hasn't expired before you buy. Also, pick up beef just before checking out. If it will

take longer than 30 minutes to get your purchase home, keep your beef in a cooler.

Storing beef. A refrigerator set to 40 degrees F or below will protect most foods, but not indefinitely. Cool temperatures slow down bacterial growth but don't stop it all together.



It's important to use food in a timely manner to preserve quality and freshness. Store raw hamburger and other ground meats in the refrigerator for 1-2 days, raw roasts, steaks and chops for 3-5 days, and cooked meat for 3-4 days. Before putting beef in the freezer, label each

package with the date, name of cut and weight or number of servings. This will help you follow the "first in, first out" rule. Freezer storage guidelines to maintain quality are: 3-4 months for raw hamburger and other ground meats, 6-12 months for raw steaks and 4-12 months for raw roasts, and 2-6 months for cooked meat.

Cooking beef. Use a food thermometer to ensure food is cooked to a safe minimal internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Steaks and roasts should be cooked to 145 degrees F with a 3-minute rest time. After you remove meat from a heat source, allow it to rest for the specified amount of time. During the rest time, its temperature remains constant or continues to rise, which destroys harmful germs. Hamburgers made of ground beef should reach 160 degrees F and don't require a rest time.



For more food, nutrition and health information go to www.food.unl.edu or scan the QR code with your smart phone or other electronic device to go straight to the website.

Additional Resources & Links:

- **Recipes, storage guidelines, and cooking recommendations.** This website provides information on recipes, how-to videos, beef storage and handling, wine pairing, beef cuts, cooking timetables, and a culinary dictionary.
<http://www.nebeef.org/inthekitchen.aspx>
- **Grill skills.** Brush up on your grill skills with tips from this site or by referencing the *Interactive Meat Case* to learn which beef cuts are best on the grill.
<http://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com/>
- **Easy ground beef recipes from your freezer.** Think of how often you could use already-browned and ready-to-go ground beef “crumbles” in recipes such as soups and sauces. Here's how to make your own and keep them frozen for ready access!
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/ground-beef-recipes>
- **Roast beef for easy meals.** Put roast in oven, insert oven thermometer, remove 1 to 3 hours later. EAT. Enjoy any leftovers for 3 to 4 days in sandwiches, soups, and casseroles.
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/oven-roasting-beef>.

- **Walk Nebraska Newsletters.** Each month these newsletters cover a variety of topics related to getting active by walking year round.
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/walknenewsletters>
- **UNL Extension Calendar** – National Food Days, Weeks, and Months for May.
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/may>

Sources:

1. Nebraska Beef Council. (2012). Accessed at: <http://www.nebeef.org/>.
2. United States Department of Health and Human Services. (2013). Storage Times for the Refrigerator and Freezer. Accessed at: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/storagetimetables.html>.
3. United States Department of Health and Human Services. (2013). Safe Minimum Cooking Temperatures. Accessed at: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/mintemp.html>.
4. United States Department of Agriculture. (2012). MyPlate. Protein Foods Group. Accessed at: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/protein-foods.html>.
5. Cattleman's Beef Board and National Cattleman's Beef Association. Get the Skinny on Beef. (2011). Accessed at: <http://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com/leanbeef.aspx>.

Updated: May 2013