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## How to prepare meat for cooking

You can cook meat a number of different ways, from roasting to pan-searing to barbecuing. However, there are five basic principles that apply to the vast majority of techniques when it comes to meat and poultry. Here's what we've found after years of cooking in our test kitchen.This post originally appeared on The Feed by America's Test Kitchen.1. Use High Heat to Develop FlavorBrowning creates a tremendous amount of flavor and is a key step when cooking meat. This happens through a process called the Maillard reaction, named after the French chemist who first described it in the early 1900s. The Maillard reaction occurs when the amino acids and sugars in the food are subjected to heat, which causes them to combine. In turn, hundreds of different flavor compounds are created. These compounds break down to form yet more new flavor compounds, and so on, and so on. When browning meat, you want a deep brown sear and a discernibly thick crust on all sides—best obtained by quick cooking over high heat.To ensure that meat browns properly, first make sure the meat is dry before it goes into the pan; pat it thoroughly with paper towels. This is especially important with previously frozen meat, which often releases a great deal of water. Second, make sure the pan is hot by preheating it over high heat until the fat added to the pan is shimmering or almost smoking. Finally, make sure not to overcrowd the pan; there should be at least 1/4 inch of space between the pieces of meat. If there isn't, the meat is likely to steam instead of brown. If need be, cook the meat in two or three batches.2. Use Low Heat to Preserve MoistureFor large cuts of meat or poultry, we often advocate a low-and-slow cooking method. We find that this approach allows the center to come up to the desired internal temperature with less risk of overcooking the outer layers.An experiment we recently conducted proves that even cooking isn't the only benefit of slow roasting: It also helps minimize the loss of flavorful juices (and fat). We took two 6-pound rib roasts and roasted one at 450 degrees and the other at 250 degrees until each was medium-rare. We then weighed the cooked roasts. The slow-cooked roast had lost about 9.25 percent of its starting weight, while the high-temperature roast had lost nearly 25 percent of its original weight. Why the difference? Proteins shrink less and express less moisture and fat when cooked at moderate temperatures than when roasted at high heat. Cooking at the wrong temperature is a common mistake. Cleaning your cast iron with soap and water? Squeezing every last bit of ground beef into that...Read more3. Match the Cut to the Cooking MethodTough cuts, which generally come from the heavily exercised parts of the animal, such as the shoulder or rump, respond best to slow-cooking methods, such as pot roasting, stewing, or barbecuing. The primary goal of slow cooking is to melt collagen in the connective tissue, thereby transforming a tough piece of meat into a tender one. These cuts are always served well done.Tender cuts with little connective tissue generally come from parts of the animal that receive little exercise (like the loin, the area along the back of the cow or pig). These cuts respond best to quicker, dry-heat cooking methods, such as grilling or roasting. These cuts are cooked to a specific doneness. Prolonged cooking increases moisture loss and can turn these tender cuts tough.4. Don't Forget about Carryover CookingSince the temperature of meat will continue to rise as it rests, an effect called carryover cooking, meat should be removed from the oven, grill, or pan when it's 5 to 10 degrees below the desired serving temperature. Carryover cooking doesn't apply to poultry and fish (they don't retain heat as well as the dense muscle structure in meat). The following temperatures should be used to determine when to stop the cooking process:\*These doneness temperatures represent the test kitchen's assessment of palatability weighed against safety. The basics from the USDA differ somewhat. Cook whole cuts of meat, including pork, to an internal temperature of at least 145 degrees and let rest for at least 3 minutes. Cook all ground meats to an internal temperature of at least 160 degrees. Cook all poultry, including ground poultry, to an internal temperature of at least 165 degrees. You may read more information on food safety from the USDA.5. Rest Your MeatThe purpose of resting meat is to allow the juices, which are driven to the center during cooking, to redistribute themselves throughout the meat. As a result, meat that has rested will shed much less juice than meat sliced straight after cooking. To test this theory, we grilled four steaks and let two rest while slicing into the other two immediately. The steaks that had rested for 10 minutes shed 40 percent less juice than the steaks sliced right after cooking. The meat on the unrested steaks also looked grayer and was not as tender. A thin steak or chop should rest for 5 to 10 minutes, a thicker roast for 15 to 20 minutes. And when cooking a large roast like a turkey, the meat should rest for about 40 minutes before it is carved.Now that you know the basic principles, try applying them to one of our recipes, like Pepper-Crusted Beef Tenderloin Roast. It's easy to make—just oven-roast it until it's done—and, as the absolute most tender cut of beef, it's luxurious to eat. We boosted the flavor with a crunchy peppercorn crust. Sometimes it's the small touches that make the biggest difference when you're in the kitchen....Read moreThe Five Basic Rules for Cooking Meat | The Feed by America's Test KitchenOn cimeatbook.com, find meat recipes, meat video tips, and all meaty matters regarding The Cook's Illustrated Meat Book.We're the cooks, editors, and cookware specialists at America's Test Kitchen, a very real 2,500-square-foot kitchen located just outside Boston. Our mission is to find the very best recipes, ingredients, and kitchen equipment—we do the testing so you don't have to. Find us on our blog, public television, radio, or our many books and magazine publications. Go behind the scenes with us in the kitchen on Twitter (@TestKitchen) and on Facebook.Image adapted from Nikiteev Konstantin, Richeat, and Mikhail Bakumovich (Shutterstock). Additional images by America's Test Kitchen.Want to see your work on Lifehacker? Email Andy. A. Game meats are becoming more common not only on restaurant menus, but for home cooks, as well. Don't be scared away by these unusual meats — most are very flavorful and easy to prepare. While some may appear on your supermarket's meat counter, you may need to special order others from your butcher.Buffalo, also referred to as bison, is similar in taste to beef. It is high in protein and very low in cholesterol. It also has about half the fat and calories of beef. Buffalo should be cooked slowly at a low temperature and should be served rare to medium-rare.Ostrich is a tender, lean red meat with a somewhat delicate flavor, and it is extremely low in fat and cholesterol. Quick grilling and sautéing are the best cooking methods.With virtually no fat and lots of protein, farm-raised rabbit has a sweet flavor and is an excellent alternative to chicken. Cook rabbit as you would chicken -- grill, sauté, roast or braise.Venison is low in fat, calories and cholesterol. Like buffalo, it is a healthy alternative to beef. It has a richer flavor than beef and should be cooked quickly over high heat and served rare to medium-rare.Q. I tend to serve Italian sausage all the time. What other types of sausage can I serve for a change of pace?A. Sausages are believed to date back over five thousand years. At one time, they were considered sinful and were ultimately banned. Later, they were served by an American president to the King and Queen of England. Virtually every culture has its own variety of sausage and every variety has numerous variations.We all know about Italian sausage, bratwurst, and frankfurters, but you might want to try the following varieties:Weisswurst: a German white sausage made of pork and veal and mildly spiced.Chorizo: a pork sausage popular in Mexican cooking and seasoned with garlic and chili powder.Linguiça: a Portuguese pork sausage seasoned with cumin, garlic, and cinnamon.Mettwurst: a cured beef and pork sausage spiced with ginger, mustard, coriander, and allspice.A. Before carving turkey or chicken, let it stand about 15 minutes. Before carving beef, pork, or lamb, let it stand 10 to 20 minutes.Unless you are planning on carving at the table, place the meat on a large cutting board with a well at one end to hold the juice. (Or place a cutting board inside a shallow baking pan with a rim. The juice will collect in the baking pan.) Use a long, sharp carving knife to slice the meat and a long-handled meat fork to steady the meat while carving.When carving beef, pork, veal, or lamb, always cut across the grain. This gives you a more tender slice of meat.Q. Why do recipes tell you to let roasted meat "stand" for a while before carving?A. Meat temperatures continue to rise for a few minutes after the meat is removed from the heat, so generally, you should remove meat from the oven when it is 5°F to 10°F from its final cooking temperature. A stand time of 10 to 20 minutes for large cuts of meat, such as roasts, turkeys, and whole chickens, is recommended to allow the meat to finish cooking without drying out.Not only does this prevent overcooking, it also makes the meat easier to carve. Many experts also believe that standing permits the moisture in the meat, which comes to the surface during cooking, to return to the tissues, thereby making the meat moister.For more great tips on cooking meat, and meat recipes, see:How to Carve MeatHow to Roast MeatBenefits of Red Meat Photo Courtesy: Hinterhaus Productions/DigitalVision/Getty Images Channeling your inner professional chef is certainly a lot easier when you have the best cookware, especially when you choose a set that perfectly suits your cooking style and kitchen appliances. When you want to fry, steam, boil, sear and saute, you want to make sure you have the right tools to master all your favorite recipes and cooking techniques on hand. If you cook on a gas stove, then you need cookware that distributes heat very evenly, which is why stainless steel is an ideal option. Top brands like Cuisinart, All-Clad and Calphalon all make and sell individual pieces as well as full sets of stainless steel cookware. Some stainless steel cookware, such as the Duxtop Professional Stainless set, works with induction stovetops, which require pieces to have magnetic bottoms. If you're looking for the best nonstick cookware set, we've got you covered on that as well. Here's a look at some of the best cookware options on the market. With more than 1,700 five-star reviews, the Cuisinart Multiclad Pro 12-piece cookware set is popular among cooks of all skill levels. The polished surface is nonreactive, and three-layer construction is designed to provide even heating, optimal heat retention, and minimal hot spots. Stay-cool handles are a bonus for this dishwasher-safe set, which works on a variety of cooking surfaces, including induction cooktops. Ideal for anyone just starting out or looking to outfit their kitchen without busting their budget, the Cook N Home 12-piece stainless steel set comes complete with everything you need to start cooking. Each piece is made of 18/10 stainless steel for superior quality and results. The glass lids feature steam vents and provide easy viewing, and everything is dishwasher-safe. Looking for a nonstick option? Consider the Cuisinart GreenGourmet cookware set, which comes in 12-piece and 15-piece options. Boil water, sear meats, and whip up your favorite dishes while enjoying even cooking. This hard-anodized aluminum set is nonreactive. Each piece is designed for optimal heat conduction and scratch-resistance. The ceramic interior of the GreenPan Valencia cookware set is diamond-reinforced, making it a durable option that's safe to use with metal utensils. It's free from contaminants like lead, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The hard-anodized exterior resists scratching and is safe to pop in the dishwasher. Each piece features a base made with Magneto technology for optimal stability and warp-resistance. Timeless, versatile, and warrantied for a lifetime, the All-Clad D3 stainless steel cookware set is a terrific option for professionals and anyone who spends considerable time in the kitchen. Three-ply bonded construction allows you to achieve perfect searing. Each piece in this set is compatible with any cooktop. You can use it in the oven or under the broiler at up to 600 degrees Fahrenheit. Complete your kitchen with the Lodge cast iron bundle, which is already seasoned with 100 percent vegetable oil so that you can get cooking faster. It's ideal for searing, but the heat retention of cast iron also lends itself well to broiling, braising, sautéing, grilling, and baking. This USA-made set is built to last. It may not be from a well-known household name, but the Duxtop Professional 17-piece stainless steel induction set should not be overlooked. It's designed to last and works with every cooktop, especially induction. It's dishwasher-safe and safe to use in ovens up to 550F. It comes with everything from frying pans to stockpots. It even includes a steam basket, pasta basket, and three kitchen tools. The gorgeous hammered copper exterior of the Martellata 10-piece copper cookware set adds a distinctive touch to the kitchen. Made in Italy, this attractive set features 18/10 stainless steel interiors for flavor purity and excellent searing. It also features three-layer construction for even heating that ensures reliable results. Are you short on storage space? The neatly stacking design of the Calphalon Premier 15-piece set, gives you around 30 percent more space to work with. The set comes with all the pieces you need to create your favorite recipes or to try new things in the kitchen. The stay-cool handles add convenience while the tri-layered construction provides even heat distribution. For soups, stews, and braising meat, it's tough to beat the performance and versatility of Staub's Cast Iron Round Cocotte, which offers four-quart capacity and reliable results. It comes with a heavy lid that keeps moisture in during the cooking process. It's oven-safe at temperatures up to 900F. The smooth, enamel bottom makes it ideal for use on any cooktop, including ceramic, gas, and induction. how to prepare deer meat for cooking. how to prepare rabbit meat for cooking. how to prepare shark meat for cooking. how to prepare bear meat for cooking. how to prepare meat for chinese cooking. how do you prepare meat for cooking. how should meat be prepared for cooking



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