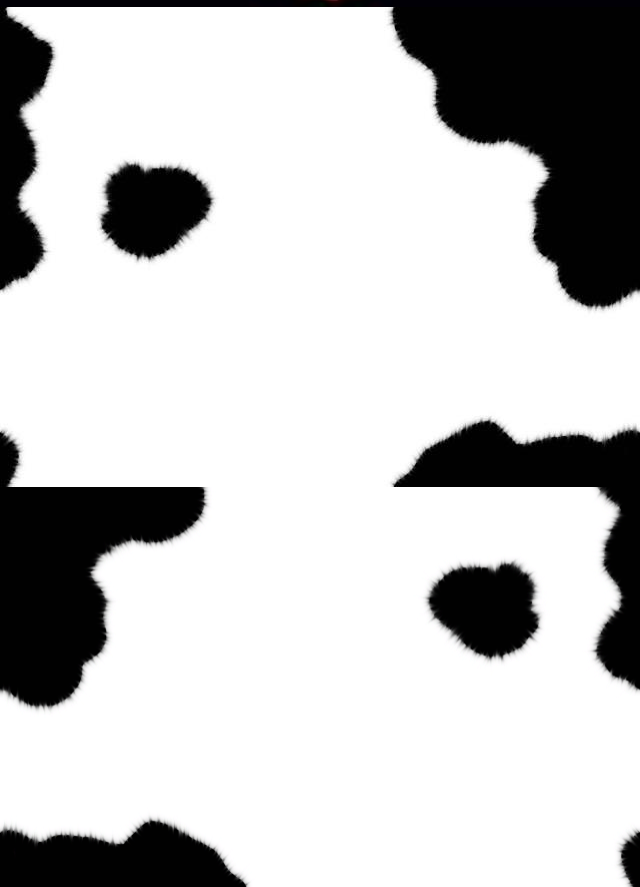


Ground Beef Notes



What is the difference between “hamburger” and “ground beef?”

- Meat labeled “hamburger meat” is allowed to have fat added. Ground beef only contains the fat that is there naturally.



What do the labels mean?

- The maximum fat allowed in ground beef is 30% (making it 70% lean) – which is a high fat content.
- The best choice is “extra lean”, which contains no more than 5% fat (95% lean).
- “Lean” may contain 15-20% fat by weight (80-85% lean)
- Chuck has the highest fat in ground beef cuts, and sirloin has the least.
- If you purchase grass fed beef, the fat labeling will be the same. But grass fed beef has a healthier fat profile, with a better omega-6 to omega-3 ratio – making it a good choice.



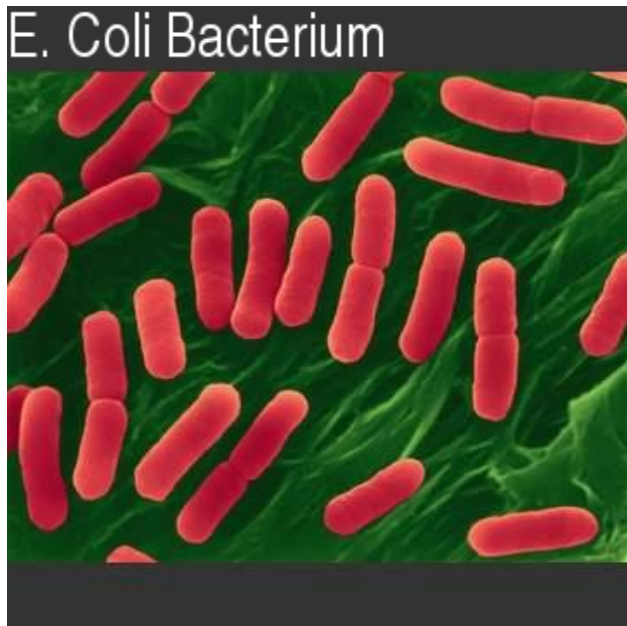
What cuts of beef is ground beef made from?



- Ground beef is made from less tender and less popular cuts of beef.
- Grinding tenderizes the meat and the ground up fat reduces dryness and improves flavor.

What kind of bacteria can be found in ground beef? Are they dangerous?

- The bacteria found in beef that causes illness is *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 (e. coli). This bacteria can not be seen or smelled.



Escherichia coli (E. coli strain O157:H7) is a bacterium that normally lives in the intestines of people and animals. Under certain conditions it may become pathogenic (disease causing) and cause food poisoning, hemorrhagic diarrhea and kidney failure.

E. coli produces toxins that damage the lining of the intestine. The strain originates from the intestines of some cattle and spreads to contaminate beef products and milk.

Why is Ground Beef especially susceptible to the e. coli bacteria?

Ground beef is especially susceptible because the grinding exposes more of the meat surface to the air, butcher's hands, cutting equipment, etc.

E. coli is found in the intestines of animals and this can cause contamination to the meat at slaughter.



E. coli is difficult to detect during processing (CNN)

How is E. coli contamination prevented?

- It is legal for beef processors to add ammonia to ground beef to eliminate e. coli and salmonella.
- E. coli is killed by thorough cooking. Ground beef must be cooked to an internal temperature of 160° F.
- Although most commonly linked with undercooked ground beef, raw milk, apple cider, produce that has been grown in contaminated soil has also been linked with e.coli outbreaks (spinach is an example of this).
- Safe handling is the key to preventing illness.

How long does Ground Beef stay fresh and safe to eat?

- Most grocery stores put a “sell-by” date on their packaging. The “sell-by” date is not a Federal requirement, it is just a guide for the retailer.
- This date can be used as a guide for the consumer as well.
- The USDA suggests that consumers cook or freeze ground beef within 2 days of purchase.

If there is no “sell-by” date, how can I know if the meat has spoiled or is old?

- There are other bacteria in beef that cause spoilage, but are generally not harmful otherwise. They cause the meat to develop a foul odor, feel sticky on the outside, taste bad, and generally lose quality.
- When in doubt – **THROW IT OUT!**

Won't color tell me if my beef is fresh or not?

- Under normal circumstances, bright, cherry-red color indicates fresh ground beef. However, fresh ground beef goes through a number of color changes during its shelf life.
 - A darker, purplish-red color is typical of vacuum-packaged ground beef or the interior of packaged ground beef that has not been exposed to air.
 - Once exposed to air, ground beef will turn from darker red to bright red.
 - With extended exposure to air, beef's cherry-red color will take on a brown color.
- It's important to remember that these color changes are normal.
- Use the "sell by" date on the package label as a guide to freshness.

What is the best way to handle raw ground beef?

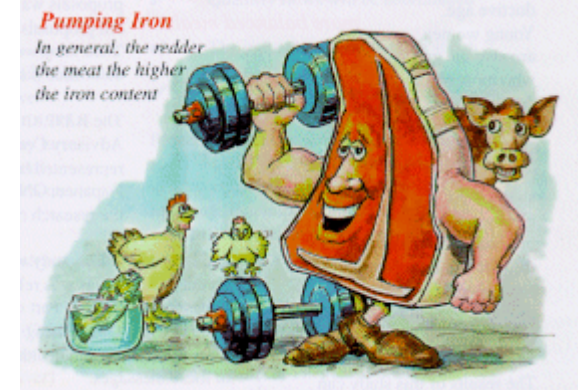
- When purchasing, choose a package that is not torn and feels cold.
- Enclose the package in a plastic bag to avoid leakage onto other food.
- Refrigerate or freeze as soon as possible after purchase.
- Keep ground beef refrigerated at 40° F. or below and use within 1-2 days
- Do not reuse any packaging materials.

Tips for safely cooking with ground beef

- Wash hands, utensils, and surfaces thoroughly with hot, soapy water when handling raw ground beef.
- Throw packaging away immediately.
- Cook any food item containing ground beef to 160° F. Use a meat thermometer to assure proper degree of doneness.
- Casseroles, leftover cooked burgers, or other meals containing cooked ground beef can be safely refrigerated for about 3-4 days. Leftovers should be heated to at least 160° F. or until hot and steaming.



Beef Nutrition



- A 3 oz. serving of beef is approximately the size of a deck of cards.
- 3 oz. is an excellent source of **protein, zinc, vitamin B12, selenium, and phosphorus.** – It is the #1 food source of these nutrients in the American diet!
- It is also a good source of **niacin, riboflavin, vitamin B6, and iron.**