

# GRASS-FED MEATS

## COOKING BASICS

### About Grass-fed meats

Pastured meats are usually:

- Lean
- Higher in Omega 3's
- High in vitamins A, D, E
- Higher in CLAs  
(*conjugated linoleic acids*)

However, not all pastured livestock are created equal. Unless the label says "100% grass-fed," or "grass-fed-grass-finished," that animal probably spent some or nearly all of its life fed grain. Why? Because grain fattens animals quickly.

You may want to ask your butcher, grocer or farmer if the grain was laced with subclinical antibiotics.

It takes longer for 100% grass-fed beef to reach harvest size.

Grass-fed-grass-fed beef eats grass hay in winter.



### Cooking Pastured Meats

To create great-tasting meals with great texture requires a few, slight changes to our cooking techniques because the meats are very lean.

This means cooking either:

- **Low and slow:** Using very low temperature for an extended time, as for a braised roast or beef stew, or
- **Very quickly:** Using skillet or casserole on stove top, or using a pressure cooker

### About Low & Slow

**In the oven:** This usually refers to braising. Braising means using a covered casserole or dutch oven to roast the meat in a 1/4"-deep bath of savory broth or wine/broth combination at 225° or 250°F for 4-6 hours. You can walk away for hours and return when dinner's done!

## Choose great taste & high nutrition

Try to select beef that hasn't been stressed by grain, hormones, subclinical antibiotics, or extensive travel to the processor.

Most of the beef sold in the US has traveled hundreds, if not over one thousand, miles from feed lot to slaughter house.

Look for beef that's local. Low food miles means less stress on the animal.

*Bull Brook Keep cattle are grass-fed-grass-finished. They get no grain, no hormones, and no subclinical*

*antibiotics.*

### Resources

- ▶ *Pasture Perfect: The Far-Reaching Benefits of Choosing Meat, Eggs, and Dairy Products from Grass-fed Animals*, by Jo Robinson, Vashon Island Press, 2004
- ▶ *The Grassfed Gourmet Cookbook*, Shannon Hayes, Eating Fresh Publications, 2004

**Slow cookers:** I don't recommend them because they tend to simmer at too high a heat causing the meat to dry out and toughen. Slow cookers are notorious for having poorly regulated or calibrated controls, and thus boil the heck out of food. This is fine for fatty pork roasts, but not for lean pastured meats.

## Cooking Fast

### On the Grill

- > Don't walk away from the grill, not even for a minute.
- > First grill till just rare over low heat, and then very quickly sear over high heat. Remove from grill immediately.

### Stove top

- > See the cautions above.
- > If simmering the meat, use the barest of simmers — just a few bubbles bursting every few seconds. Use a heat diffuser if at all possible.
- > If the pot is covered, check it every once in a while to make sure the liquid isn't simmering too vigorously.

### Pressure Cooker

Now this type of cooker seems to present a contradiction because it cooks quickly at high heat. Research indicates you may lose 1 or 2% of nutritional content using a pressure cooker, and some studies find you're likely to lose more when simmering or boiling your food. Still other investigations seem to indicate the using a pressure cooker extracts more nutrition from many types of food. (See Pressure Cooker sheet.)

- > **Caution: do not use the "quick release" method** when exhausting the pressure in either the stove-top or electric appliances. Doing so will dry out the meat.