



## November 2001 – Beef

I thought I would write a little exercise on beef, to help identify what cuts of beef are more tender and why they should be cooked in different ways. Most of what is written here can be applied to all kinds of meat.

The structure of beef is made up of long thin muscle fibres that are bound together by connective tissues. It is these connective tissues that are tough so determine how we cook a piece of meat. Muscles that are exercised more, like a leg muscle have more connective tissue, than lets say the back muscles. Also older animals will have more connective tissues than younger animals. These connective tissues can be broken down with long slow cooking in moist heat, this means using a liquid such as stock or tomatoes to braise the meat in; as with a stew or pot roast. One can also use an acid to help dissolve the tissues like wine, just add this to a marinade or to the liquid you are cooking it in.

The heat you use can greatly effect how tough a piece of beef will be. High heat toughens the proteins and results in excessive moisture loss. The exception to this is grilled or broiled meat, like a steak. This is because it is done quickly, so the inside never is allowed to get very hot. The tenderest cuts are usually used for roasts, steaks and chops. These are cooked using dry heat such as roasting, grilling and BBQ'ing and are often served rare or medium rare. These cuts of meat come from the rib and loin section, such as

Prime rib, Rib steaks, Tenderloin, T-bones, Porterhouse steaks, Strip loin (New York), Top Sirloin, bottom Sirloin and Inside (top) round also known as the Baron of beef.

The tougher pieces of beef like chuck or shoulder are usually cubed for stewing and the brisket is usually made into corned beef. The shank can be ground for ground beef or cubed for stew or left whole and stewed. Beef flank can be broiled and cut across the grain into thin slices; this cuts the connective tissues in to chewable sizes. When braising a piece of tough meat, it is usually cooked beyond well done which is indicated by its tenderness. When the prongs of a fork slide in and out easily, the meat is done.

### **Beef, mushroom and cheese salad**

This dish maybe served as a main dish or as an appetizer.

1 Flank steak (1 1/2lbs)

Salt and pepper

-sprinkle on steak. Broil or grill on each side for 3-4mins. The beef should be quite rare. Set aside.

3T Olive Oil

1 lb mushrooms –sliced, sauté with oil.

1 Lemon juiced- add to mushrooms. Season with salt and pepper. Cool.

-Slice beef thinly, across the grain. Toss with mushrooms. Reserve the extra meat and mushroom juices.

1/2c Parsley

1/2lb Swiss cheese-cubed and tossed with the parsley, beef and mushrooms

### **Mustard-garlic vinaigrette**

2T Dijon mustard

1 head of garlic roasted

-cut the top quarter of bulb off and drizzle with Olive oil, wrap in tin foil, bake 45 mins @ 350\*. Cool. Unwrap and squeeze out the garlic paste by squeezing the root end of the garlic bulb.

1/3c Wine vinegar

1/2c Olive Oil

1/2c Corn Oil

Salt and pepper

Process all the ingredients.

-toss with the juices from the salad, then toss in with the mushrooms and the meat. Allow to marinate for several hours.

-This can be served on greens, atop off a warm pita bread.

### **Stefado of beef**

3lbs stewing beef – cut into 1” cubes

1 x 6oz can tomato paste

1/2c parsley –chopped

Salt and pepper

1 bay leaf

1t Oregano

1t Cinnamon

1t Cumin

1/2t Sugar

1/2c dry white wine

1/4c red wine vinegar

1lb Small white onions-parboiled and peeled.

-Don't hesitate to use ordinary onions, thinly sliced if none are available.

4 Garlic cloves-finely chopped

-combine all the ingredients, cover tightly and bake 1 1/2hours @ 350\*, til meat is tender. Keep the stew at a gentle simmer, the heat may have to be turned down.

-Do not boil sauce down, it should remain thin. Ladle the stew on to a deep platter.

1/2lb feta-crumbled

1c Walnuts-coarsely chopped

1/2c Parsley-chopped

-use as a garnish.

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