

Give Your Family More of the Good Stuff!





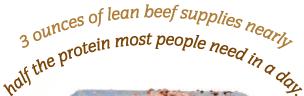


Ground Beef Basics

\$hop and \$ave

- Color of ground beef can vary from dark purple-red to a bright red on surfaces exposed to oxygen. Darker color on the inside does not mean poor quality or spoilage.
- Watch for sale prices on meat. Stock up if you can cook or freeze within a few days.
- Large 'bulk' packages of ground beef may be cheaper per pound than smaller packages.
- Try ground beef that is 85% lean or higher. Leaner meat usually costs more per pound but there is less waste.

Never leave ground beef at room temperature for more than 2 hours





Store Well Waste Less

- Refrigerate raw ground beef and use within a few days after the 'sell by' date for best quality.
- Refrigerate cooked meat for up to a week. Freeze for longer storage; use within 2 to 3 months in any recipe using cooked ground beef.
- Freeze raw ground beef to store longer.
- Divide into amounts that would be used at one time.
- Flattened squares or circles about 1-inch thick thaw more quickly than a ball or tube shape.
- Package in freezer-quality wrap.
 Exclude as much air as possible; label and date. For best quality use within
 4 months.

Thaw Ground Beef Safely:

- 1 Refrigerator: Safest method. Allow 12 hours to thaw 1 pound. Meat does not need to be cooked immediately and could be re-frozen.
- **2** Cold water: Safe if water is kept cold and covers the package. Allow 1 hour to thaw 1 pound. Cook meat immediately after thawing.
- Place the package in a leakproof plastic bag. Submerge in cold water, changing the water every 30 minutes. Use a weight to hold the package under the surface of the water.
- 3 Microwave: Safe if cooked immediately. Do not re-freeze unless cooked first. Edges and corners may partially cook during thawing.
- Remove from packaging; place in a microwave safe container. Use the automatic defrost setting or microwave for **about 3 minutes** at 50 percent power for a 1-pound package.



This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. SNAP can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact Oregon SafeNet at 211. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

