

Meat Selection

Written by W.J.Pais



Meat is animal flesh (mainly muscle tissue) used as food, sometimes with the exception of fish, other seafood, and poultry. Originally, the word meat meant simply "food". It is also used as a vulgar way to refer to the human body. (see meat market.)

For the most part, meat for human consumption comes from domesticated animals bred specifically for this purpose, and killed in an abattoir. The use of other meats, such as venison, the meat of small game animals and a few other mammals, and even the meat of certain reptiles and amphibians, is not uncommon. The use of meat from other mammals is much less common, although nearly every animal that lives has probably been used for human food at one time. What meats are used and the way they are cooked depends on the availability and cuisine.

To ensure the safety of our families it is important that we are able to choose the freshest cuts available at our local grocers. The following are the four basic types of meat and the look, texture, and color you want to look for when grocery shopping.

BEEF

Beef is, by far, the most used of the meats. Being the most used it should also be the best checked. The color of the lean portions of beef should be a bright red. Vacuum-packaged beef

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and the interior of ground beef should have a more darker, purplish red color because the meat has not been exposed to the air. After the beef has been exposed to air it will begin to turn the familiar bright red.

VEAL

Very young beef is classified as veal. Veal follows basically the same criteria as older beef. Veal is by nature a naturally lean meat and very easy to prepare. It should have a fine grainy texture and be creamy pink in color. Any fat covering should milky white.

LAMB

Most lamb meats sold are usually from animals 1(one) year or younger. Look for meat that has a pinkish red color. There should also be a very velvety texture. There is usually little marbling and only a thin layer of fat around the outside of the meat. The bones should be visibly porous and reddish in color, indicating a young animal.

PORK

Pork, is a widely used meat. The lean part of fresh pork should be grayish pink in color and have a fine grainy texture. For ham, the lean should be firm, fine grained, pink in color, and free from excess moisture. The fat, covering the outer layer of the meat, should have a firm feel and be milky white in color.

Meats are a very ample source of nutrition and can be very tasty when prepared in the right dishes. But just like with any food they require inspection and should be bought from a trusted butcher or grocery store. I hope my tips on how to select quality meats helps you select and prepare quality meats for yourself and your family.

Cold Cuts

Thin sliced meats used in sandwich-making are called cold cuts.

In recent years, forms of imitation meat have been created to satisfy some vegetarians' taste for the flavour and texture of meat, and there is speculation about the possibility of growing in vitro meat from animal tissue.