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EAT WELL FOR LESS FROM THE MEAT GROUP

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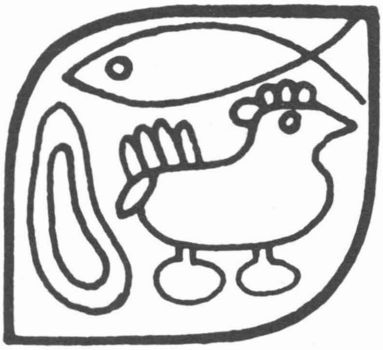

Nutritional Value

The average American is eating twice as much red meat as he did 40 years ago although the average protein requirement has decreased. This requirement can be fulfilled by eating two servings of meat along with a variety of other foods. The meat group includes beef, pork, lamb, veal, poultry, eggs and fish. Also included are alternates for meat in the diet that usually cost less than meat, such as dry peas and beans, lentils, nuts, soybeans, peanuts and peanut butter.

These foods contribute protein, which is necessary for growth and repair of body tissues (such as muscles, organs, skin, blood and hair). Meat group foods provide iron, thiamin, riboflavin and niacin. Lean parts of beef (lightweight** and heavy) lamb, pork and poultry are good sources of protein and other nutrients. Pork is an outstanding source of thiamin or Vitamin B_1. Liver is an excellent source of iron as well as Vitamin A, certain B-vitamins and protein.

Choose two or more servings from the meat group daily. A serving could be 2 to 3 ounces of boneless, lean cooked meat, poultry or fish. One half a serving could be 1 egg, ½ cup cooked dried peas or beans or 2 tablespoons of peanut butter.

Buying Tips

When buying meats, consider the cut, grade and kind with the use in mind. Less-tender cuts compose about three quarters of the beef carcass. Less-popular cuts of meat, variety meats (such as liver, heart and kidney) and less-tender cuts of beef (such as shoulder, rump, chuck, round, brisket, flank, plate, shank and neck) may be cheaper in price.

In deciding which is a more economical buy, the basis for comparing meat is the cost per serving of the lean or meaty portion. Another economical buy is ground beef blended with textured soy protein. It has been shown that about 20 percent of the cost of ground meat can be saved by purchasing this mixture. In addition, it is juicier, has less shrinkage and suffers no loss of flavor or nutrition.

The basis for determining an economical buy of meat is to consider the cost per serving of the lean or meaty portion. Buy meats according to the number of servings per pound after they are cooked. Consider the size of the bone, the amount of fat and gristle. The amount of these three things in meat determines the number of servings per pound. The cheapest meat may not be the best buy if it contains more bone and gristle, thus decreasing the number of servings.

Lightweight beef offers economy as well as variety for family meals. This beef has reduced marbling and fat covering due to the absence of grain in feeding. However, the nutritional value or quality is not affected by the reduced fat covering. Reduced marbling may change flavor and juiciness with little effect on tenderness.

For additional saving and variety, buy a large cut of beef and divide it into several smaller pieces, each to be cooked in a variety of ways at different times. For example, a large pot roast may be cut into stew meat, a roast, or swiss steaks. A chuck roast could be cut into beef tips.

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**Beef from 12-24-month-old animal, weighing 600-1000 pounds prior to marketing. May also be referred to as budget beef, light beef or forage-fed beef.

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Buy larger whole chickens and turkeys for more meat in proportion to bone. Pre-cut fryers are more expensive. However, if your family only prefers one specific piece, white meat or dark meat, it is more economical to buy what they will eat. A large turkey may be cut into parts before cooking to meet the family needs better.

Compare cost per pound of fresh, frozen or canned fish before deciding the most economical buy. In relation to eggs, generally speaking, if there is less than an 8-cent difference per dozen eggs between one size and the next smaller size, you will get more egg, by weight, for your money by buying the larger size. Grades AA and A eggs are more desirable for frying and poaching, while Grade B eggs, which can be used successfully for general food preparation, are less expensive.

Storage

Store raw meats in the refrigerator. Keep meats covered in the refrigerator in store wrapping, plastic bag or covered container. Meats to be frozen should be wrapped in freezer wrap that is moisture-vapor-resistant, easy to label, easy to handle and economical. Store eggs in a covered container away from foods with strong flavors. Store canned meats on a kitchen shelf until opened and then refrigerate. Store dried peas, beans, dry textured soy protein and peanuts on a kitchen shelf in airtight containers.

Preparation

Usually, the economical cuts of meat are less tender. When preparing meat that is less tender, cook it slowly with moist heat, marinate to the extent that it can be cooked by dry heat, or use either mechanical or chemical tenderizers.

Tenderize economy cuts of meat manually by chopping with a dull edge of knife or use a meat tenderizer. Chemical or meat tenderizers improve the tenderness of beef as well as enhancing the mild flavor of lightweight beef. Use these tenderizers according to the manufacturer's directions to avoid a mushy texture.

Marinades enhance the flavor of beef, especially lightweight beef. A combination of an acid (vinegar, citrus juice, tomato juice, fruit juice) and a cooking oil (salad oil) plus herbs and spices are the standard ingredients for marinades. Marinade recipes are included in *Let's Cook Lightweight Beef,* L-1349.

Cook less tender cuts of meat at a low to moderate temperature (300°-350°F) with moist heat for better flavor and texture and less shrinkage. High heat toughens protein and causes shrinkage, which results in fewer servings per pound. More expensive tender cuts of meat cook best at a low to moderate temperature with dry heat.

MEAT GROUP RECIPES

King Ranch Chicken

2 packages corn tortillas
2 fryers or one hen, boiled and deboned
1 large chopped onion, sautéed
1 large bell pepper (optional)
1 can mushroom soup
1 can cream of chicken soup
¼ to ¾ cup processed cheese, grated
1¼ teaspoons chili powder
Garlic salt
Salt
Pepper
1 15-ounce can tomatoes with chilies

Dip tortillas in hot boiling chicken stock to moisten. Layer casserole with tortillas. Add ingredients except soups and tomatoes as listed. Pour soups and whole hot tomatoes on top. Bake 30 minutes at 350° F. Serves 8-10.

Individual Pot Roasts

2 pounds boneless beef chuck
¼ cup flour
1½ teaspoons salt
⅛ teaspoon pepper
1 tablespoon fat
1 bay leaf, crumbled
½ teaspoon oregano
½ cup sliced onion
¼ cup water
2 tablespoons flour
½ cup water

Cut meat into six individual pieces. Mix flour, salt and pepper in paper sack, add meat and shake. Melt fat in heavy pot or frypan with lid, and brown meat on all sides. Add bay leaf, oregano, onion and ¼ cup water. Cover and simmer for 1½ to 2 hours, until meat is tender. Remove meat and keep warm. Skim off excess fat. For each cup of liquid add 2 tablespoons flour with ½ cup cold water. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly until thickened.

Arrange meat in nests of rice or buttered noodles on large chop plate. Serve gravy separately. Serves six.

Glazed Ham Loaf

1 pound leftover cured ham, ground
¼ pound pork butt, ground
¼ pound beef, ground
2 eggs
½ cup milk
¾ cup bread crumbs
2 tablespoons brown sugar
2 tablespoons chili sauce

Mix the meat, eggs, milk and bread crumbs until well blended. Form into a loaf and place in a loaf pan. Mix the brown sugar and chili sauce together. Pour over the top of the loaf. Bake about 1 hour at 325° F. Then bake 15 minutes at 350° F. Serves six.

Note: If plain ham loaf is desired, omit brown sugar and chili sauce glaze and serve the meat with mustard sauce.

Liver Skillet Dinner

1 pound liver
1 cup water
½ green pepper
¼ cup shortening
1 No. 303 can peas
or
1 package frozen peas
1½ teaspoons salt
½ pound uncooked noodles (2 cups)

Simmer liver in water about five minutes. Slice onion and cut pepper in ¼-inch strips. Cook five minutes in shortening; remove from heat. Pour off liquid of liver into onion, pepper mixture. Cut liver in ½-inch strips. Add to onion, pepper mixture. Add remaining ingredients; cover and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serves four.

Chopped Liver Spread

½ pound liver
Water
2 medium onions
6 hard-cooked eggs
Pepper
3 tablespoons margarine
Salad greens
Salt

Simmer liver in water until tender. Drain. Chop in chopping bowl or put through food chopper with fine knife. Chop onions and 5 hard-cooked eggs. Combine liver, onion and eggs with salt and pepper to season and melted butter or margarine to make a thick paste. Pack into mold and chill thoroughly. Turn onto chilled platter and garnish with sliced hard-cooked egg and salad greens. Makes 2 cups.

Oven Meat Stew

2 pounds lean raw beef chuck, neck, or shank cut into 1-inch cubes cut into 1-inch cubes
Flour, salt, pepper and paprika
4 to 6 tablespoons shortening
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup tomato purée
1 cup water
6 small onions
6 small potatoes
6 small carrots

Sprinkle meat cubes with flour, salt, pepper and paprika and brown in hot fat. Transfer meat to a greased casserole. To the remainder of fat, add 2 tablespoons flour and blend. Add tomato purée and water. Pour over beef, cover and cook 1 to 1½ hours at 350° F. until beef is nearly tender. Then add whole onions, potatoes and carrots and cook until tender, about an hour longer. Serves six.

Chili Con Carne

1½ cups dry pinto beans (optional)
4½ cups water
½ cup diced salt pork
½ cup chopped onion
1 clove garlic, minced
1 pound lean ground beef or
1 pound lean ground beef with textured soy protein
2 to 4 teaspoons chili powder
3 cups canned tomatoes
Salt and pepper to taste

Boil beans in water 2 minutes, remove from heat and soak 1 hour or overnight if preferred. After soaking, cook until tender (about 2 hours or at 15 pounds pressure for 10 minutes). In another pan, fry salt pork until crisp, remove salt pork, and brown onion and garlic in fat. Add ground beef, stir and cook slowly for five minutes. Add chili powder to meat mixture. Combine crisp salt pork, meat mixture and tomatoes with the cooked beans. Add salt and pepper to taste and simmer until meat is tender and flavors are well blended. Serves six to eight.

Tuna-Egg Patties

White Sauce
4 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
1 can (6½ ounces) tuna, drained and flaked
3 tablespoons chopped pimiento
2 tablespoons chopped onion
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
½ teaspoon celery salt
½ teaspoon paprika
Flour
2 eggs
2 tablespoons water
2 cups finely crushed corn flakes
1 tablespoon shortening
1 cup chili sauce

White Sauce

Melt ¼ cup butter or margarine in saucepan over low heat. Blend in ¼ cup flour, ¼ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon pepper. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture is smooth. Remove from heat. Stir in 1 cup milk. Heat to boiling, stirring constantly. Boil and stir one minute. Remove from heat.

Grease baking dish 8x8x2 inches. Prepare white sauce. Stir in hard cooked eggs, tuna, pimiento, onion, parsley, celery salt and paprika. Spread in baking dish. Refrigerate one hour.

Cut tuna mixture into nine squares. Coat squares with flour; shape into patties. Beat eggs and water slightly. Dip patties into egg mixture; coat with cereal crumbs. Melt shortening in skillet.

Lightly brown patties over low heat about five minutes on each side. Heat sauce in saucepan over low heat. Serve patties with warm sauce. Serves five-six.

Basic Marinade for Beef

Garlic powder
Pepper
Meat tenderizer
2 cups vinegar
¼ cup soy sauce
⅓ cup salad oil
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 bay leaf

Sprinkle meat with garlic powder, pepper and meat tenderizer; prick meat with sharp-tined fork to help tenderizer work. Mix all other ingredients. Place meat in non-metal container and cover with marinade. Let stand in refrigerator overnight. This should make a thick-sliced chuck roast perfectly acceptable for grilling.

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