

Cooking with Ground Beef

Ground beef is 100 percent beef that is ground up and packaged. It is a great source of protein, vitamin B₁₂, iron and zinc.

A serving size is 3 ounces, which is about the size of a deck of playing cards.

Uses

You can add ground beef to many recipes including spaghetti, tacos and meat loaf. Ground beef also makes tasty hamburgers.

A 1-pound package of ground beef will make four hamburger patties.

How to store it

Keep frozen ground beef in the freezer until you are ready to use it. For best taste, use it by the “best if used by” date on the package.

How to thaw it

Thaw ground beef by placing it on a plate on the lowest shelf in the refrigerator. The plate will catch any juices that might spill on other foods.

It takes about 24 hours for frozen ground beef to thaw in the refrigerator.

Once the ground beef is thawed, use it within one day.

Note: Never leave frozen ground beef out on the counter to thaw. Even when cooked, beef that has been thawed at room temperature can make you sick.

Cooking it safely

When cooking hamburgers, make sure the inside of the patty is cooked to 160 degrees F. Use a food thermometer to measure the temperature of the patty.

If you do not have a food thermometer, cut open the middle of the patty and make sure the inside is brown.

For dishes that contain ground beef, cook the beef before mixing with other ingredients.

How to store cooked ground beef

Leftover food made with ground beef should be placed in the refrigerator right away to prevent it from spoiling. Use it within 3 days.

Reheat foods with ground beef until they are steaming hot, bubbling or have an inside temperature of 165 degrees F.

Spanish Rice with Ground Beef (Makes 5 servings, 1 cup each)

What you need

- 1 pound ground beef (thawed)
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 small bell pepper, chopped
- 2 stalks of celery, chopped (if you like)
- 15-ounce can tomato sauce
- ½ cup rice, uncooked (not instant)
- 1 cup water

How to make it

1. Wash your hands; make sure your cooking area is clean.
2. Brown the ground beef in a skillet; drain the excess grease.
3. Add the onion, bell pepper and celery and cook them for 5 minutes.
4. Add the tomato sauce, rice and water.
5. Reduce the heat.
6. Cover and simmer it for about 30 minutes.

Adapted from Commodity Fact Sheet for USDA Household Programs: Finely Ground Beef, by Jenna Anding, Assistant professor and Extension Nutrition Specialist, The Texas A&M University System.

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