

Economical Use of Meat in the Home

The importance of meat as a source of protein (essential for the construction and maintenance of the body), and fat (useful as a heat and energy producer), has been noted often enough in these columns to render repetition at this time superfluous. To those who have been interested in the subject, however, we trust they have not been few—the following table from a bulletin (No. 391) recently issued by the United States Department of Agriculture will prove not only interesting, but suggestive:

AVERAGE COMPOSITION OF CUTS OF MEAT.

Kind of Meat.	Water.	Protein.	Fat.	Ash.	Fuel Value
Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Calo. ries.
BEEF—					
Brisket.....	54.6	15.8	28.5	0.9	1,495
Chuck rib.....	66.8	19.0	13.4	1.0	920
Flank.....	59.3	19.6	21.1	0.9	1,255
Porterhouse.....	60.0	21.9	20.4	1.0	1,270
Neck.....	66.3	20.7	12.7	1.0	920
Ribs.....	57.0	17.8	24.6	0.9	1,370
Round.....	67.8	20.9	10.6	1.1	835
Shank.....	70.3	21.4	8.1	0.9	740
Side.....	62.2	18.8	18.8	0.9	1,145
VEAL—					
Side with kidney					
ney fat and tal					
low.....	71.3	20.2	8.1	1.0	715
MUTTON—					
Side without tal-					
low.....	53.6	16.2	29.8	0.8	1,560
LAMB—					
Side without tal-					
low.....	58.2	17.6	23.1	1.1	1,300
PORK—					
Tenderloin.....	66.5	18.9	13.0	1.0	900
Chops.....	50.7	16.4	32.0	0.9	1,655

It will be noted that the difference between the cuts is chiefly due to the varying amount of fat, with consequent difference in fuel value. So far as proteins, a very important part of food, are concerned, very little difference is found. From this, it appears that in this respect brisket is almost as nourishing as porterhouse steak. The difference in price, however, is considerable; hence the housekeeper who wishes to economize in money, without diminishing in the nutriment supplied, has her cue.

Quoting from the bulletin: "The portion of cooked meat which may be referred to as an ordinary 'helping,' three to five ounces, may be considered to contain some 19 to 29 grams of protein. An egg or a glass of milk contains about 8 grams more, so the housekeeper who gives each adult member of the family a helping of meat each day, and eggs, milk, or cheese, together with the puddings or other dishes which contain eggs and milk, can feel sure that she is supplying sufficient protein, for the remainder necessary will be supplied by bread, cereals, and other vegetable food." The total amount of protein needed each day is, by the way, usually estimated at 100 grams, or 3½ ounces.

In reckoning the food value of any material, digestibility must, of course, be considered; a food rich in nutritive qualities is not, clearly, of much use, if the digestive organs cannot make use of it. Investigation has been made with meats in this respect, and it has been shown that there is practically no difference between the various cuts of meat, if properly prepared, in regard to digestibility. The difference in preparation is chiefly this, that the cheaper cuts must, as a rule, be slowly cooked, and for a long time. A porterhouse steak, for instance, is at its best when fried quickly, and with just a suspicion of rareness, over a hot fire; round steak, on the other hand, is likely to be better if seared on both sides and slowly simmered in a very little water, closely covered, for about three hours. Cheap cuts are, in fact, just as nutritious and just as palatable as the more expensive ones, provided you know how to cook them.

In estimating the real value of cuts of meat, allowance must, of course, be made, for bone. By a process of reasoning, which it is not necessary to follow out here, the bulletin estimates that when porterhouse steak sells for 25 cents a pound, round steak at 15 cents and chuck ribs 10 cents, the

relative prices of the edible portions would really be 28½ cents for porterhouse, 16½ for round, and 22 cents for chuck ribs. Round steak would, therefore, give the most value for the money, even more than chuck ribs at only 10 cents per pound.

These are details which the housewife must look out for. In doing so, the following table may be of use to her:

Kind of Meat.	Bone or Waste in Cut. Per cent.	Edible Material in Cut. Per cent.	Assumed Market Price in Cents.	Net Price per lb of edible portion. Cents.
BEEF—				
Brisket.....	23.3	76.7	7.0	9.0
Rump.....	19.0	81.0	10.0	12.5
Flank.....	5.5	94.5	7.0	7.5
Chuck rib.....	53.8	46.2	10.0	22.0
Porterhouse.....	12.7	87.3	20.0	23.0
Neck.....	31.2	68.8	7.0	10.0
Ribs.....	20.1	79.9	15.0	20.0
Round.....	8.5	91.5	15.0	16.0
Shank.....	38.3	61.7	3.0	5.0
Heart.....	5.9	94.1	5.0	5.3
Tongue.....	26.5	73.5	22.0	29.8
VEAL—				
Cutlets.....	3.4	96.6	20.0	21.0
Breast.....	24.5	75.5	12.5	17.0
MUTTON—				
Leg.....	17.7	82.3	15.0	18.0
Chops.....	14.8	85.2	15.0	17.5
Fore quarter.....	21.2	78.8	12.5	20.0
PORK—				
Loin.....	19.3	80.7	15.0	20.0
Salt pork.....	8.1	91.9	12.5	13.0
Bacon.....	8.7	91.3	20.0	22.0
Ham.....	12.2	87.8	20.0	23.0

It will be noted by the chart that the tenderest cuts are those in the upper portions of the body, which are not moved as the animal goes about. The tougher cuts are all lower down. They may be converted to tenderness by long and slow cooking in water, the outside having first been seared in a very hot oven, or hot pan on the stove, or by boiling water, to keep the juice in. Sometimes a tough steak is soaked in olive oil, a rather expensive process, which, however, adds to the nutritive qualities, as olive oil is itself a valuable food. A tough piece of meat may also be softened by soaking it in vinegar and water, although the vinegar may slightly retard digestion.

Coming to meats proper, the methods of cooking employed by an experienced teacher of cooking, are given as follows: "She says that she tries to reduce the cooking of meat to its lowest terms, and teach only three ways. The first is the application of intense heat to keep in the juices. This is suitable only for portions of clear meat where the fibres are tender (choice roasts, steaks, etc.). By the second method, the meats are put in cold water and cooked at a low temperature (soups). This is suitable for bone, gristle, and the toughest portions of the

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meat, which, for this purpose, should be divided into small bits. The third is a combination of these processes, and consists of searing and then stewing (simmering) the meat. This is suitable for half-way cuts, i. e., those that are neither tender nor very tough" (boils and stews).

Having grasped these three principles for a working basis, the securing of variety by different seasonings and garnishes is an easy matter—the meat cooked just right the rest follows.

Careful choice of cuts; perfection of cooking, according to the method which the various cuts require; careful serving at the table, so that no one will be given more than he or she really wants or needs; expedients for using up chance left-overs in an appetizing way; meat only once a day, with eggs, milk soups, cheese, beans, etc., to supply the protein at other meals—in these rules is suggested the way by which the expense of the meats used may be lessened without really depriving the family of necessary nourishment.

If the family simply refuse to eat the fat of meat, it should be used up in other ways—tried out and used for shortening, in addition to vegetables, etc.

Trying-out Fat.—A double boiler is best for this, as by using it the danger of burning the fat is done away with.

Clarifying Fat.—Pour boiling water over it, boil thoroughly and set away to cool. Remove the fat then in a solid cake, and scrape off any impurities. Repeat the process two or three times, if necessary.

A slight burned taste, or other flavors, may be often removed by means of potatoes. After melting the fat, put into it thick slices of raw potato, and heat gradually. When the fat ceases to bubble, and the potatoes are brown, strain the fat.

Savory drippings, for use with vegetables.—When rendering, add to the pint, a small, whole onion, a few leaves of savory and thyme, a little salt and pepper. Keep covered in a cool place ready for use.

To Use Up Bones.—Rib bones with meat on them may be roasted. Bones with very little meat, or only gristly portions, may be cracked, soaked in cold water, gradually heated, and made into soup. Odd trimmings of meat may always be used in this way, or run through a meat-grinder and made into appetizing hashes, meat-balls, etc.

Stew with Dumplings.—Put some dripping in a saucepan. When smoking hot, sear bits of meat in it until brown. Cover with boiling water, boil for five minutes, then simmer about three hours. During the last hour, add bits of carrots, turnips, potatoes, etc. Season and thicken slightly. Mutton or beef may be used in this way; also veal, chicken and fresh pork. For the latter three, if liked, a little cream or milk thickened with flour may be added to the gravy. Serve on a platter with dumplings around, made as follows:

Two cups flour, 4 level teaspoons baking powder, ½ cup milk, 2 teaspoons butter, pinch salt. Mix and sift the dry ingredients, work in the butter, add milk, make into small cakes, and steam 12 to 15 minutes, or drop into the stew. Chopped parsley, or a very little sage, may be added to the dumplings, if liked.

If preferred, small, light biscuits may be served around the stew, instead of dumplings.

Meat Pies.—These may be made of a rich stew, prepared as above, and covered about 20 minutes before serving with a top made either like a light biscuit dough, like pie paste, or a layer of mashed and seasoned potatoes. Bake in the oven until slightly browned. To get this effect, brush the top of the pastry with milk, or beaten yolk of egg. If potatoes are used, the top may be dotted with butter. Either raw or cooked meat may be used for meat pies, and tomatoes, celery, etc., may be added to the stew part to give variety.

Meat Rolls.—Chop cold ham, chicken, or lean beef—even a mixture of leftovers may be used—fine. Season well, and mix with savory dripping or a little butter to "shape." Make into very small rolls, about the size of a finger. Place on strips of rolled-out short dough, fold over neatly, brush with milk, and bake in a quick oven. If there is not much meat, cold mashed potatoes or boiled rice may be added to make "enough."

Meat Cakes.—Chop veal, etc., fine. Mix with one-fourth the quantity of bread crumbs soaked, a little chopped onion, and any other seasoning that is liked, salt and pepper. Mix into small, flat cakes, and fry in dripping until browned on both sides. If cooked meat is used, keep the pan covered.

