

## ✓ *Tips For Cooking Bison*

There is no such thing as tough bison meat, only improperly instructed cooks. Although buffalo meat is similar to beef, it needs to be prepared and *cooked differently*. You will find you can interchange bison meat with most of your favorite beef recipes if you follow a few basic instructions.

Individual cuts of buffalo appear identical to beef, except for color. Prior to cooking, bison meat is dark red - almost red brown. This coloring is due to the fact that buffalo meat does not marble (produce white streaks through the meat) like beef, and to the fact that preservatives are not used to make the meat look artificially red.

*Trim your bison meat of all perimeter fat.* If there is any visible fat, cut it off. Do not cook the fat. Remember **SLOW AND LOW** is the key to cooking lean meat. You may cook buffalo to the same doneness that you like in beef. We recommend rare to medium. No promises are made for well-done (totally destroyed) steaks or roasts! Overcooked buffalo meat will bring you the same result as other meats that are overcooked - something nearly as palatable as roofing shingles.

Taste panels evaluation from research done at the South Dakota State University Experiment Station found as the oven temperature increased and the internal temperature of the roast rose to well done - texture, juiciness and tenderness scores went down.

## ✓ *Roasts*

The best oven temperature is a 275° F. Preheat oven. To insure the desired results, use a meat thermometer. In general, you can plan on the roast taking the same amount of time or less than beef would take at the higher temperature. Bison, with no fat, cooks more quickly, so check on it. Bison cuts suitable for roasting are rib steaks and roasts, tenderloin, and sirloin roasts.

## ✓ *Crock Pot Cooking*

Very slow, moist heat works especially well with the less tender cuts of meat such as the chuck. The best way is a crock pot or slow cooker. Let it cook all day. With the moist, slow cooking method, you don't have to worry about over cooking. You can cook it until it falls apart. Use the low setting on your crock pot. The foreshank, brisket and stew meat are also well suited to this cooking method.

## ✓ *Pan Fry, Pan Broil, Or Braise*

First, **turn the heat down!** You can use a standard beef recipe but watch the temperature. If you use high heat with bison, use it only for a very, very short time such as searing, then watch the cooking time. Bison cooks faster than beef.

## ✓ *Broiling*

Move your broiler rack farther away from the heat than you would for beef, about two to five inches. Broil as you would your beef but shorten the cooking time. Turn the

steaks a few minutes sooner. Rib steaks, tenderloin, and T-bone steaks are scrumptious this way.

## ✓ *Grilling*

If you have a grill that tells the temperature, keep it down! Or let the coals die down some. Don't put lean bison meat in the flame. If you are grilling a piece of meat that needs a long time to cook, keep the temperature low and use a recipe that includes a marinade, barbecue sauce, or other basting liquid. Lean meat is dry to begin with. You need to baste frequently.

## ✓ *Stir Fry*

Stir fry is an excellent method of cooking bison. Cut the meat into small strips or cubes. Be sure to use just a drop of olive oil or a polyunsaturated oil just to coat the pan. Remember, bison cooks quickly so have your onion, green & red peppers, pea pods, etc. ready to toss in the wok. Heat the oil only enough to sear the meat, toss the meat quickly around, and then add the other foods. Proceed as the recipe calls for but keeping the heat down some. The short cooking times in stir fry recipes are excellent for cooking bison.

## ✓ *Microwave*

Microwaving is an excellent way to cook bison, as well as to reheat leftover meat. Steaks are great using the microwave. Either brown the steaks quickly in a frying pan or use the browning pans that microwaves have. Once the steak is browned, a microwave having one of the high energy levels will cook that steak to medium rare in about 24 to 40 seconds, according to your taste and the thickness. *Practice.* Steaks cooked to well done will have a steamed flavor which I do not like. I only advise cooking them to the medium stage.

A version of stirfry can be done by the microwave. Very small strips or cubes of meat, marinated or not, along with some of your favorite accompaniments can be put in a covered microwave dish, microwave a minute, stir and put back in for another minute or so. Cook to taste.

## ✓ *Using Ground Bison*

Ground bison is all lean. Browning ground bison will give that caramelization but should produce no fat to drain off. Some suppliers "grade" bison ground meat because some people want a little beef fat (tallow) added back for burgers. It makes grilling easier. Be sure to ask your supplier whether you are buying 100% bison lean or whether you are getting ground bison with beef tallow.

You can use ground bison in beef recipes. According to the cooking methods used in the recipe, you might be able to skip the browning stage if it was just to cook the fat out and if you are buying the 100% lean bison. I feel that the browning process does add flavor to most recipes and should not be skipped. An over powering barbecue sauce, etc. might be an exception. Be sure your recipe calls for enough cooking time to cook the ground meat.