



Low and Slow Cooking Tips:

Cooking Steak

Highland steaks are best if cooked “low and slow”. If you can either bank a charcoal fire to one side of the grill, creating a hot area and a cooler area, or with gas, turn down on one portion of the grill, and then you will be able to cook your steak to perfection.

We recommend having the steaks cut to about 1 ½ inches thick. This helps eliminate overcooking. Sprinkle the steaks with kosher or sea salt, fresh ground black pepper and non-MSG garlic powder. As an alternative, use one of the pre-mixed steak salt and herb mixtures, like the McCormick Montreal Steak Seasoning (again, non-MSG). Rub in the mixture (using a large spoon works great!), cover the meat, and let it stand for 20 minutes or so, coming to room temperature. This gives the salt an opportunity to work and is more effective than applying it at the end of the cooking process.

Start the steaks over the hot area of your grill, sear both sides, and then move the steaks to the cooler portion of the grill. Keep the top down as much as possible. Ideally the internal temperature of the grill (with the top down) should be about 220-300 degrees. Roast the steaks until they reach an internal temperature of 115 degrees (away from the bone), remove the meat from the heat, cover with foil, let sit for 5-10 minutes, then serve. This should produce a medium rare steak. The internal temperature continues to rise during the rest period, thus it will reach approximately 130-135 degrees. Note, resting also allows the meat to retain juice. Cutting immediately will cause much of the juice to flow out of the meat.

Check out the September 2005 issue of Bon Appétit, on page 166, for Bobby Flay’s Ancho-and Coffee-rubbed Filet Mignon and Ancho-Mushroom sauce. It looks great! (Roast at a low temperature, than indicated in the recipe however!!)

BURGERS

Chef Stenberg has been experimenting with burger with higher fat levels. He finds burger mixed with 12-13% fat provide a juicier burger. (This is not fat from another animal!) Cook the burger in much the same way as the steak. Sear it on both sides, then cook them over medium heat until you reach an internal temperature of 135 degrees. Remove them from the grill, cover with foil, and let the burgers rest for 5-10 minutes or so. The internal temperature should reach 165 degrees, at which point it should be slightly pink inside. Burger needs to be cooked throughout as all parts of it have been touched by the cutting blades of the grinding machine. Reaching the proper temperature is the only way to assure your meat is safe. You may want to experiment a little, double checking with the thermometer. When the burger starts to feel firm, you know you are about done. Cooking slower allows the internal portion of the burger to cook without drying out the outer part of the meat. Do not press the burger while cooking, as that forces the juices out of the meat. Keep your eye on the fire, as it is easy to over cook the burgers, resulting in a very dry

piece of meat.

Another tip: don't overwork the burger when making the patties. The less you handle the meat, the better the burger's consistency.

MISC

Argentine Tip

The Argentines have perfected the cooking of grass fed beef. They relax, drink some wine, and let a nice wood fire do the work Low and Slow!! Relax, enjoy cooking and fresh, locally grown meats and vegetables.

Check out Slow Food USA., an organization dedicated to preserving local foods and traditions.

A couple of general tips which impact flavor: If cooking on a grill, clean the grates, and the inside of the lid of your grill, if it is covered. Clean the grates with a wire brush, then coat with cooking oil, either by rubbing it on with a paper towel, or spraying it with PAM (there is a version for grills). Your grilled meat can pickup flavor from old grease that has built up inside your grill, including the top. Gas grills may not be as susceptible to the top being as dirty, but even those can have material that builds up and can flake off onto your food.

Cook with the cover closed in order to maintain the temperature, which is important when using indirect heat.

Because of questions from our friends, customers, and fellow Highland owners, we have concluded that providing cooking tips and recipes for lean beef will enable you to more fully enjoy our product. McLaughlin Farm will periodically issue new editions of this newsletter with new tips, and additional recipes. Consumer education is so important that our breed association has recently retained a chef as a consultant, providing producers like ourselves with valuable information concerning the preparation of lean beef. The chef's name is Eric Stenberg, and some of the information set forth in this newsletter comes from him. He is a member of the Chef's Collaborative, an organization which promotes locally grown and artisan foods. He has much experience with Highland beef, serving customers in his restaurant and at resorts in Montana. Other sources include Cook's Illustrated and various web sites. References and websites are set forth below.

Our beef is a lean beef product. McLaughlin Farm grass feeds its cattle for approximately 2 years, and then the cattle are finished with grain and pasture (or hay in the winter). The beef is then dry aged for a minimum of 14 days. In the future we will be trying to find a processor that will age our beef longer, hopefully up to 28 days. It is believed that one important aspect of good flavor is the age of the animal. The older the animal, the greater the flavor. Since grass fed beef in general, and Highland beef in particular, requires a longer period to mature, this leads to enhanced flavor. Aging also enhances flavor, and tenderness. Most beef sold in grocery stores is not aged.

Cooking lean beef sometimes requires different techniques than its more marbled counter-parts, however, all beef, no matter what the source will do better if cooked low and slow. For certain cuts, like roasts, however, the techniques described here apply to any beef.

The key concept to remember is to cook lean beef **LOW AND SLOW!** Cooking at lower temperatures, for longer periods helps the meat retain moisture, allows the meat to attain a consistent, more uniform temperature, thus allowing for more medium rare meat, and no drying

of the outer edges. This works for all beef, but is a necessity for lean beef in particular. We learned in Argentina that cooking beef for longer periods produced an exceptional product and experience.

Low and Slow Tip

Highland steaks are best if cooked “low and slow”. Steaks with bone have more flavor! If you can either bank a charcoal fire to one side of the grill, creating a hot area and a cooler area, or with gas, turn down on one portion of the grill, then you will be able to cook your steak to perfection.

We recommend having the steaks cut to about 1 ½ inches thick. This helps eliminate overcooking. Sprinkle the steaks with kosher or sea salt, fresh ground black pepper and non-MSG garlic powder. As an alternative, use one of the premixed steak salt and herb mixtures, like the McCormick Montreal Steak Seasoning (again, non-MSG). Rub in the mixture (using a large spoon works great!), cover the meat, and let it stand for 10-20 minutes or so, coming to room temperature. This gives the salt an opportunity to work and is more effective than applying it at the end of the cooking process.

Start the steaks over the hot area of your grill, sear both sides, and then move the steaks to the cooler portion of the grill. Keep the top down as much as possible. Ideally the internal temperature of the grill (with the top down) should be about 220-300 degrees. Roast the steaks until they reach an internal temperature of 115 degrees (away from the bone), remove the meat from the heat, cover with foil, let sit for 5-10 minutes, then serve. This should produce a medium rare steak. The internal temperature continues to rise during the rest period, thus it will reach approximately 130-135 degrees. Note, resting also allows the meat to retain juice. Cutting immediately will cause much of the juice to flow out of the meat.

Meat that has not been touched by the processor’s cutting blades or exposed to the air, can be eaten when cooked to lower internal temperatures. The exterior of the meat must be fully cooked however, in order to kill bacteria and germs. Meat that has been touched by a knife, saw or the cutting blades of the grinding machine must be cooked to a safe temperature. Reaching the proper temperature is the only way to assure your meat is safe. You may want to experiment a little, double checking with the thermometer. When the burger starts to feel firm, you know you are about done. Cooking slower allows the internal portion of the burger to cook without drying out the outer part of the meat. Do not press the burger while cooking, as that forces the juices out of the meat.

We start with good, aged burger with approximately 10-15% fat content. Cook the burger in much the same way as steak. Sear it on both sides, then cook them over medium heat until you reach an internal temperature of 130-135 degrees. Remove them from the grill, cover with foil, and let the burgers rest for 5-10 minutes or so. The internal temperature should reach 165 degrees, at which point it should be slightly pink inside. Burger needs to be cooked throughout as all parts of meat have been exposed to the cutting blades.

Keep your eye on the fire, as it is easy to over-cook the burgers, resulting in a very dry piece of meat.

Low and Slow Tip!!

“Sprinkle the steaks with kosher or sea salt and fresh ground black pepper and non-MSG garlic powder.”

Low and Slow Tip!

Thermometers

The small, “instant” thermometers are very useful for testing your meat. More sophisticated versions are available, such as the electronic versions by Polder, some of which give you a reading inside the grill chamber, as well as that of the meat.

See the Weber website for a remote thermometer. Double checking accuracy of thermometers from time to time is worthwhile too; they do not seem to last forever!

We use them all of the time!!!!

Low and Slow Tip!

Remove the meat to a plate and cover. Reduce the sauce over a moderate heat. Spoon some on the meat and serve the rest in a gravy boat.

Low and Slow Tip!

Did you know that cooking time is not directly correlated to temperature? Meat cooked at 350° F will cook twice as fast as meat cooked at 200° F.

Rest the Meat!

Your meat will continue to “cook” once you remove it from the grill, oven or stove. Letting it rest allows the juices to be retained, and in the process the internal temperatures will continue to rise. The key is to remove the meat at a low enough temperature to allow it to finish at your target degree of “doneness”.