



BEEF

Cafeteria Connection

Tell Me about Beef

Washington is home to more than 9,000 cattle farms, with an average of 40 cattle per farm. The beef that comes from these cattle is nutrient dense, providing an excellent source of essential nutrients that support growth and strength through all stages of life.

Crediting Information

- In general, 1 oz cooked lean beef credits towards the Meat/Meat Alternates (MMA) meal pattern component as 1 oz eq MMA.
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- MMA is measured in ounce equivalents (oz eq). An oz eq of MMA is the amount of food representing the same nutritional content as 1 ounce of edible portion of lean meat without the bone. The more ingredients a beef item contains, such as Roast Beef Deli Meat, the greater the portion size must be to contribute 1 oz eq MMA.
- Beef items must be accompanied by either a Child Nutrition (CN) Label, Product Formulation Statement, or a direct match with a beef item in the USDA Food Buying Guide to validate MMA meal pattern contribution.



Nutrition Facts

Beef is a nutrient powerhouse. While the specific nutritional information depends on many factors, beef is an excellent source of vitamin B12 and protein, and a good source of iron and vitamin B6. Protein helps build and repair body tissues including muscles.



Selection and Storage

- If freezer storage is available, beef cuts may be less expensive when purchased in large volume. What can't be used immediately can be frozen for later use.
- Meat should have a rich pink color, and bones should be bright white.
- Defrost beef on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator (never at room temperature) in the original package on a sheet tray or other container to catch any juices.
- Keep raw meat and meat juices away from other foods, both in the refrigerator and during preparation.
- Ground beef is more perishable than roasts or steaks. Plan to use refrigerated ground beef within two days of purchase.
- Learn about safe cold food storage here: [Cold Food Storage Chart](#) | [FoodSafety.gov](#).

Culinary Tips

- For easy sheet pan dishes, ground beef can be roasted directly in a pan along with other vegetables and seasoning. No additional oil is needed.
- Choosing the right pan is crucial. Four or two-inch deep pans will allow heat to penetrate the interior of the beef, cooking it evenly.
- When roasting larger cuts of beef, space out the roasts within the pan for a more even cook, allowing air circulation between each piece.
- Chuck roast and brisket are great cuts for stews and shredded beef dishes, while sirloin tip, round, and rump roast are best for sliced sandwiches. Skirt, flank, top round, and top sirloin steaks are best for beef strips.
- Make sure to pay attention to critical control points to ensure safe food handling. The [School Foodservice Beef Resource Guide](#) includes temperatures and food safety tips.



Cattle, credit: WSDA

Recipes

- [Tex Mex Meatloaf Washington Recipe for Schools](#)
- [Braised Beef Birria Washington Recipe for Schools](#)
- [Barbecue Beef Sliders USDA Recipe for Child Care Centers](#)
- [Ropa Vieja USDA Recipe for Adults in CACFP](#)

Sourcing

- [Find Beef](#).