

## Reducing Fat in Cooked Ground Beef

A study in *the Journal of The American Dietetic Association*\* has good news for beef eaters. Nutrition researchers found that a simple rinsing process reduced the fat content of cooked ground beef crumbles by as much as 50 percent. And, blotting can be used to reduce the fat content of cooked burgers, meatballs and meatloaf. So whether you buy ground beef for taste, convenience or price, you also can enjoy the health benefits of lower-fat ground beef with a few easy steps.

### Reducing Fat in Cooked Ground Beef Crumbles by Rinsing and Draining:

By following the easy steps below, you can cut the fat in your favorite recipes that call for cooked ground beef crumbles, such as chili, Sloppy Joes, spaghetti with meat sauce and tacos. This technique will allow you to take advantage of lower-priced, higher-fat ground beef and still enjoy the benefits of a leaner product.

**Brown ground beef** in skillet over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes or until no longer pink. Stir occasionally to break beef into large pieces (about 1/4 inch).



Step 3

**Meanwhile microwave 4 cups water** in 1-quart glass measuring cup or microwaveable bowl on HIGH 5 to 6 minutes or until very hot, but not boiling (150 to 160 degrees F).

**Drain fat** from skillet.

Using a slotted spoon, **remove beef** crumbles to large plate or other container lined with 3 layers of white, non-recycled paper towels. Let sit 1 minute; blot top of beef with more paper towels.



Step 4

**Place beef in a line mesh strainer** or colander and set it on a 1/2-quart (or larger) sturdy bowl.

**Pour hot water over beef** to rinse fat. Drain 5 minutes.



Step 5

**Proceed as recipe directs.**

If your recipe calls for browning ground beef with onion or garlic, these items can be added during the cooking process. Rinsing the beef after cooking results in minimal flavor loss. Additional seasonings and herbs may be added after rinsing as desired.

### Reducing Fat in Cooked Ground Beef Burgers, Meatballs and Meatloaf:

The steps below show how you can reduce the fat in pan-broiled ground beef burgers. Simply blot the beef with white, nonrecycled paper towels. Paper towels made for microwave use are recommended.

**Remove ground beef from refrigerator** and shape into 4-ounce patties (1/2 inch thick, approximately 4 inches in diameter). Cook immediately.

**Heat nonstick skillet** over medium heat until hot (about 5 minutes). Do not add oil. Place patties into skillet.

**Cook 10 to 12 minutes** for medium doneness or until centers are no longer pink and juices show no pink color. The USDA recommends cooking to at least medium (160 degrees F) doneness. Turn once halfway through cooking.



**Remove patties to large plate** lined with 3 layers of paper towels. Let stand 1 minute. Turn over after 30 seconds.

**Season as desired and serve.**

Blotting can be easily used with meatballs and meatloaf. The meatballs or meatloaf should be roasted on a rack in a shallow pan so that the fat drips away during cooking. Place cooked meat on a surface lined with several layers of paper towels. The sides and top (if not glazed) maybe blotted with paper towels to further reduce fat.

**Nutrient Comparison**

3-ounce cooked portion, pan-broiled to medium doneness

Ground Beef - 73% Lean/27% Fat	Calories	Fat (g)
Pan-broiled patties*	248	18
Pan-broiled patties, after blotting	230	16
Pan-broiled crumbles, after blotting only	195	12
Pan-broiled crumbles, after blotting and rinsing	135	6

Ground Beef - 80% Lean/20% Fat	Calories	Fat (g)
Pan-broiled patties*	230	15
Pan-broiled patties, after blotting	217	14
Pan-broiled crumbles, after blotting only	191	11
Pan-broiled crumbles, after blotting and rinsing	130	5

Sources: Iowa State University, Dept. of Food Science and Human Nutrition, Nov.1992  
 USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 11-1(1997)

**Other Fat Reducing Tips:**

For recipes where rinsing or blotting is not feasible, such as beef-stuffed bell peppers, it is best to use 90% lean/10% fat ground beef. If time does not allow for blotting and/or rinsing, remove any excess fat from the skillet as it accumulates by using crumpled white paper towels during browning and before adding other ingredients. Substitute low fat, low-calorie versions of ingredients. For example, use nonfat yogurt instead of sour cream. For flavor without adding fat, cook with fresh ingredients such as hot and sweet peppers, onion, garlic and tomatoes.

**Shopping and Selection:**

Make meat selections last when shopping to ensure the beef stays as cold as possible. Choose packages that are cold and tightly wrapped without tears or punctures. Check the "sell by" date on the package label. Purchase before or on the date printed. A bright, cherry-red color indicates fresh ground beef. However, fresh ground beef goes through a number of color

changes during its shelf life. A darker, purplish-red color is typical of vacuum-packaged ground beef or the interior of packaged ground beef which has not been exposed to air. Once exposed to air, ground beef will turn from darker red to bright red. With extended exposure to air, beef's cherry-red color will take on a brown color. It's important to remember that these color changes are normal. Use the "sell by" date on the package label as a guide to freshness. One pound of ground beef provides approximately four (3-ounce) cooked servings.

**Storage:**

Refrigerate or freeze ground beef as soon as possible after purchasing. Place ground beef in meat keeper or coldest part of refrigerator (35 to 40 degrees F). Use within 2 days. Ground beef can be frozen in its original, transparent packaging for up to 2 weeks. For longer storage, prevent freezer burn by re-wrapping the beef in moisture-proof, air-tight wrapping materials such as heavy-duty aluminum foil, freezer paper or plastic freezer bags. Ground beef may be stored in the freezer for 3 to 4 months at 0 degrees F or lower. Label and date all packages. Also include the weight and/or number of servings.

**Food Safety:**

Wash hands with hot soapy water immediately before and after handling raw beef. Wash work surfaces and utensils thoroughly after handling raw meats. Defrost ground beef in the refrigerator (never on the kitchen counter) to prevent bacterial growth. Allow approximately 24 hours to defrost a 1 to 1-1/2 inch thick package. Cook ground beef as soon as possible after thawing. Cook without interruption; partial cooking may encourage bacterial growth. Cook until no longer pink and juices show no pink color. The USDA recommends cooking it to at least medium (160 degrees F) doneness. Do not eat raw or rare ground beef.



**Ground Beef Nutrition Facts:**

3-ounce patty, broiled to medium doneness\*

Before blotting or rinsing and draining

Ground Beef Product	Calories	Total Fat (g)	SFA (g)	Cholesterol (mg)
95% Lean/5% Fat	145	6	2.4	65
90% Lean/10% Fat	185	10	4.0	72
85% Lean/15% Fat	213	13	5.1	77
80% Lean/20% Fat	230	15	5.9	77
73% Lean/27% Fat	248	18	7.0	77

Source: \*USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 15

A 3-ounce cooked serving of ground beef (usually about 4 ounces uncooked) is about 4 inches in diameter and 1/2 inch thick.

A 3-ounce cooked serving of ground beef provides you with about 21g of protein and about 11% of the iron you need every day.

\* Journal of The American Dietetic Association, Vol 92 No. 11 Nov.1992

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