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## EC9957 Variety Meats

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Nebraska

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK  
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

Extension  
Circular  
9957

1943

U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating  
W. V. Lambert, Director, Lincoln

# VARIETY MEATS

(Liver, Tongue, Heart, Kidney, Brains, Tripe, Sweetbreads, Oxtails)

The variety meats are rich sources of the nutrients needed by the body. While they vary greatly in the quantities of the different food stuffs they supply, they are, first of all, like other meats, good protein foods. They are usually richer in iron than purely muscular tissues. Especially valuable for their large amounts of iron are liver, heart, kidney and brains. Kidney and liver are outstanding sources of two members of the Vitamin B Complex--riboflavin and niacin, and liver contains more thiamin than any of the muscle meats except pork. Vitamin A is found in quantity in liver.

These variety meats are best when they come from good young animals. Basic methods for cooking the variety meats are given in this circular.

Very tender organs--Liver, kidneys from young animals, and brains, should be cooked slowly at a moderate temperature and no longer than necessary. Broiling or sautéing are suitable methods for cooking the tender calf or lamb kidneys and tender liver. Brains are easier to handle if precooked about 15 minutes before being used in various recipes.

Less tender organs--Beef kidneys and the muscular hearts of all animals require longer preparation. They may be made more tender by cooking them for a long time, slowly, and with some added liquid.

## LIVER

Calf and beef liver require no special preparation for cooking, but lamb and pork livers may be scalded to improve the flavor.

Preliminary preparation--If liver is braised in one piece, soak in cold, salted water for one-half hour and remove outer membrane. If it is to be ground or chopped, drop in boiling water and simmer for a few minutes. This makes grinding easier.

Braising--When braising a large piece of liver, dredge piece with flour. Brown in bacon fat. Add desired seasonings. (Vegetables such as tomatoes, celery, onions, potatoes, and carrots may be cooked with the liver.) Place liver in casserole on top of vegetables. Add 1/2 cup of liquid. Cover and cook on top of stove or in slow oven (300°F.) for about 30 minutes per pound.

When braising slices, (1/4 inch thick), dip them in seasoned flour. Brown on both sides in hot fat such as lard or bacon drippings. Lower temperature, cover pan and cook until tender (about 20 minutes).

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Broiling--When broiling slices, use calf or lamb liver only. Slices should be 1/2 to 3/4 inch thick. Brush with melted fat. Broil at moderate temperature just long enough to change color (about 3 minutes for each side). Do not broil beef or pork liver.

Frying in Deep Fat--Cut liver in long thin strips and marinate for 30 minutes or more in French dressing, 2 parts oil, 1 part vinegar. Dip in egg, then crumbs, or in flour. Fry in deep fat (360°F.) until browned.

Frying in Small Amount of Fat--Slices that are about 1/2 to 3/4 inch thick, may be rolled in flour. Brown in a small amount of fat. Brown on both sides, then reduce the temperature and continue cooking until done. Avoid overcooking. (Beef and pork liver should be braised, rather than fried.)

Other Ways to Cook Liver--Ground liver may be made into liver loaf, sandwich spread, dumplings, and bacon-wrapped patties.

**KIDNEYS** Veal, lamb, and pork kidneys may be broiled. Beef kidney should be cooked in water or braised. To improve the flavor, marinate kidney in well-seasoned French dressing.

Preliminary Preparation--Wash kidneys and remove the outer membrane. Split through the center and remove fat and heavy veins. Beef and pork kidneys should be soaked in water before cooking.

Cooking in Water--Cover beef kidney with water. Simmer until tender, about one hour. Change the water several times during cooking. Cooked beef kidney may be served in a well-seasoned sauce or dipped in egg and crumbs and fried in deep fat.

Kidney Stew and Kidney Pie--Split kidneys or slice thin. Cook a chopped onion in fat. Roll kidney in seasoned flour and brown in the fat. Add brown stock or water just to cover and simmer in covered kettle about 45 minutes or until kidney is tender. About 20 minutes before serving time, small potatoes may be added. Beef may be added to kidneys in the stew. Steak and kidney pie is stew topped with pastry and baked in a hot oven about 15 minutes.

Broiling--Prepare veal or lamb kidneys and marinate one hour in French dressing, or brush with melted fat. Put the split kidney onto a skewer to hold flat. Broil about 5 minutes on each side. To vary this broiling, halves of small kidneys may be wrapped in bacon or may be arranged alternately with bacon and tomato quarters or skewers for broiling.

**BRAINS** Brains should be precooked if they are not to be used soon after purchasing. Keep in refrigerator until used.

Preliminary Preparation--Soak brains in cold water for about half an hour and then remove membrane.

Precooking--Brains are easier to handle if precooked in water very gently for about 15 minutes. One teaspoon salt and one tablespoon of lemon juice or vinegar may be added for each quart of water used. Following this, drain, drop into cold water and remove membrane. Use at once or chill.



How to Prepare after Precooking—The precooked brains may be:

- (1) Scrambled with eggs
- (2) Diced in omelet
- (3) Reheated in cream sauce or tomato sauce
- (4) Dipped in egg and crumbs and fried in deep fat or a small amount of fat until browned.
- (5) Dipped in melted fat and broiled

Honeycomb tripe is considered especially delicate in flavor and texture.

## TRIPLE

Cooking in Water—Cover washed fresh tripe with cold water, and bring to a boil. Drain, cover with boiling salted water (1/2 teaspoon salt per pound of tripe) and simmer, covered, one hour or longer, if desired.

How to prepare after Precooking—

- (1) Brushed with fat and broiled
- (2) With a well seasoned tomato sauce
- (3) Spread with dressing and baked
- (4) Dipped in egg and bread crumbs and sautéed
- (5) Dipped in fritter batter and fried in deep fat
- (6) Creamed

## TONGUE

Preliminary Preparation—Wash tongue thoroughly in warm water.

Cooking in Water—Cover fresh tongue with salted water using one teaspoon salt for each quart of water. Vegetables and spices such as bay leaves and cloves may be added for seasonings. Cover and simmer (185°F.) until tender. A large beef tongue would require 3 to 4 hours. Remove skin, cut away roots. To help loosen the skin after cooking, plunge into cold water.

Smoked or pickled tongue, after simmering in water and browned afterward, may be sliced and served cold or reheated in a spicy sauce.

## HEART

Heart should always be cooked slowly until tender. Beef heart is larger and needs longer cooking than lamb, pork, or veal.

Preliminary Preparation—Wash thoroughly. Trim off veins.

Cooking in Water—Cover heart with water containing one teaspoon salt for each quart of water. Simmer at 185°F. until tender. Beef hearts will require about three to three and one-half hours and veal, lamb, or pork need two to two and one-half hours. Heart simmered until tender may be served sliced or it may be chopped and used in combination with other foods.

Braising—Hearts may be stuffed with bread dressing before braising or they may be cut in slices and braised. Brown heart on all sides in a small amount of fat. Add very little liquid. Season, cover closely and continue cooking at a low temperature on top of stove or in a moderate oven (350°F.). Cook beef hearts two and one-half to three and one-half hours and lamb, calf, and pork hearts one and one-half to two and one-half hours.



# SWEETBREADS

Unless sweetbreads are to be used very soon after purchasing they should be precooked and then refrigerated. For braising or frying if sweetbreads are to be used soon, precooking is not necessary.

Preliminary Preparation—Soak in cold water about 15 minutes.

Precooking—Simmer sweetbreads 15 minutes in water to which one teaspoon salt and one tablespoon lemon juice or vinegar have been added for each quart of water used. Drain, plunge in cold water and remove membrane. Use at once or chill.

How to Prepare after Precooking—

- (1) Cream with chicken, veal or mushrooms
- (2) Dip in egg and crumbs and fry in deep fat or small amount of fat until brown
- (3) Make into croquettes
- (4) Make Salad
- (5) Dip in melted fat and broil

# OXTAILS

Oxtails require long, slow cooking in moist heat. They have a good proportion of meat and a very rich flavor even though they have considerable bone.

Soup making—Cut oxtails at each joint and wash. Simmer slowly in water to which seasonings, barley and vegetables have been added just long enough before meat is tender for the vegetables to become tender. Serve meat in the soup.

Braising—Wash oxtails and cut at each joint. Roll joints in flour seasoned with salt and pepper. Brown in hot fat. Add onion or other seasoning, vegetables and spices. Bay leaves and cloves may be used. After browning well, add a cup of water and a cup of tomatoes. Cover closely. Simmer 3 to 4 hours or until meat falls from the bones.

(Prepared by Mabel Doremus, Extension Nutritionist, College of Agriculture, Lincoln)

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