

1960

## EC60-923 Care and Cooking of Game Meats

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CARE and COOKING  
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GAME  
MEATS



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# care and cooking of Game Meats

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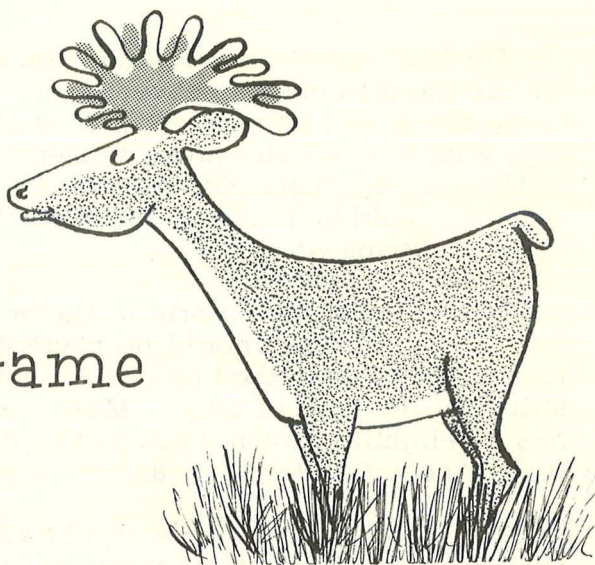
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The Nebraska Game Commission

Game meats, like domestic meats, are best when properly dressed and cooked. Good eating depends upon the treatment the animal receives when killed. For high quality meat, the animal should be promptly bled, dressed and cooled under sanitary conditions. Much good game is ruined because this procedure is not followed.

The methods for handling all animals are similar, although the technique will vary with each species and with the individual worker. Good equipment to properly care for the kill is important. Hunters should carry a good knife, wrapping paper, bags, clean cloths, string, soap and disinfectant.



## Large Game



Immediately after the kill, bleed, draw and cool the carcass. Spread the rib cage with a clean stick and hang the animal by the hind legs or antlers until cool. Use clean cloths to wipe off any dirt or pools of blood remaining on the meat. Sprinkle the carcass with pepper to repel insects, and cover it with cheesecloth.

Game must be transported from the field with care. If possible, hang the wrapped carcass in the rear of a pick-up truck where it can continue cooling and draining. The next best way to carry the carcass is on a car-top carrier. If that is not possible, wrap lightly and place on the back seat of an open car or in the trunk with the lid partly raised. The carcass should not be placed in a closed trunk or tied over the hood of the engine.

Large game should be aged in a cooler or in the open air where the temperature ranges between 36 and 40 degrees. Leave the hide on during the aging process to keep the meat from drying out. Allow a few days to age the meat of young animals, two or three weeks to tenderize the meat of older animals. Then remove the hide and cut the carcass into roasts and steaks like beef. Cook immediately, or wrap in freezer paper and store at zero degrees.

For best results in cooking, you should learn to recognize the differences between game and domestic meat. Game has a thin fat covering. It is lean meat, somewhat dry, with a dark color and a tendency, when either fresh or thawed, to drip. Off flavors are often traced to the fat. It should be removed and substituted with beef suet or bacon strips when cooked.

Game has a characteristic flavor just as other meats do. A distinction should be made between the natural flavor, often described as gamey, and flavor or odor resulting from lack of care. Meat that is well-cared for has a delightful flavor which can be developed in cooking or masked with a highly seasoned sauce.

Proper cooking methods should also be used. Roasts from young animals can be cooked like comparable beef roasts. Chops and steaks from young animals can be broiled or pan-fried. Cuts, steaks or chops from older animals should be braised, made into stew or ground meat. Many people prefer game meats cooked medium well or well done.

The following recipes may be used for antelope, elk or deer. Marinating the meat in french dressing or marinade will make it more tasty.



### Marinade

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1 cup beef broth                                     | 1 bay leaf                |
| 1 teaspoon salt                                      | 3 peppercorns, crushed    |
| 1 tablespoon pickling spice                          | 3 whole allspice, crushed |
| 1/2 teaspoon celery seeds                            | 2 tablespoons lemon juice |
| 1/2 teaspoon each of basil, marjoram, thyme and sage | 1/4 cup vinegar           |

Combine all ingredients. Put meat in a glass or crockery bowl and cover with marinade. Cover; refrigerate for 10 to 12 hours. Remove meat, drain and cook as desired.



## Roast Loin of Venison

The loin of a doe or young buck makes a suitable oven roast. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and roast on a rack in a shallow pan at 300° to 325°. Do not add water and do not cover. Allow 20 to 25 minutes per pound. A meat thermometer inserted in the center of the large muscle will indicate when the roast is rare, medium or well done.

## Broiled Steaks and Chops

Cut steaks 3/4 to 1 inch thick. Place meat on broiler, 2 to 3 inches from the heat. Broil until top side is brown. The meat should be about half done by this time. Season with salt and pepper and turn to brown the other side. Season and serve with butter.

## Pan-broiled Steaks or Chops

Cut meat 1/2 to 1 inch thick. Place in preheated skillet which has been rubbed with a little fat. Do not add water and do not cover. Turn meat occasionally. Allow 15 to 20 minutes for cooking. Season with salt, pepper and butter. Serve immediately.

## Pan-fried Venison

Thin slices of steaks or chops may be fried. Put a small amount of fat in a preheated skillet. Brown chops on one side, turn and brown on the other side. Heat may be reduced after browning to complete cooking. Season and serve at once.

## Deerburgers

Season ground venison, shape into patties, and follow directions for pan-frying. About 10 to 20 percent beef suet or pork fat ground with venison will add to its juiciness and flavor.

## Swiss Steak

2 pounds round,	1 cup water or tomatoes
1 to 2 inches thick	3 large onions, sliced
Flour, salt and pepper	

Roll meat in flour, seasoned with salt and pepper. Brown both sides slowly in fat in a heavy skillet. Add water or tomatoes and sliced onions. Cover and cook slowly on top of the stove or in a 325° oven for about 2 hours or until tender. Remove meat and thicken gravy.

## Pot Roast

4 to 5 pounds shoulder	1/4 cup water
or rump roast	1 onion
Flour, salt, pepper	2 turnips
Herbs, if desired	2 stalks celery
2 tablespoons fat	

Dredge meat in flour, seasoned with salt, pepper and herbs if desired. Brown meat on all sides in melted fat in a dutch oven or heavy skillet. Add water. Cover and simmer about 3 hours. Add vegetables, cut in pieces, 1/2 hour before meat is done.

## Venison Stew

2 pounds breast or shoulder	4 medium potatoes, diced
4 cups boiling water	4 carrots, diced
2 teaspoons salt	2 turnips, diced
1/4 teaspoon pepper	4 onions, sliced

Cut meat into 1 inch cubes. Roll in flour if desired and brown in a small amount of fat in a heavy skillet or kettle. Add water and seasonings. Cover and simmer 2 to 3 hours. Add the diced vegetables and cook until tender. Thicken the liquid with 2 tablespoons of flour moistened with water.

## Meat Loaf

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2 1/2 pounds ground venison | 3/4 cup dry bread crumbs |
| 2 teaspoons salt            | 2 eggs, beaten lightly   |
| 1/8 teaspoon pepper         | 3/4 cup milk             |
|                             | 1/2 onion, chopped       |

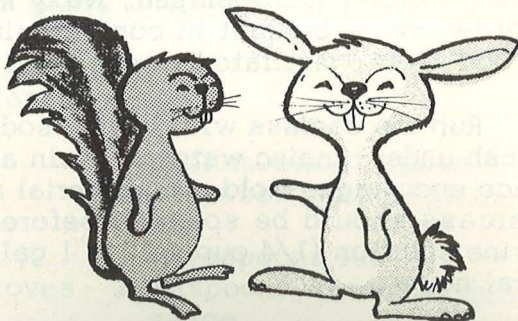
Combine all ingredients and shape into a loaf. Place in a greased loaf pan and bake in 325° oven for 2 hours. One-half pound beef suet or salt pork may be ground with the venison if it seems dry.

## Venison Mincemeat

- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2 pounds cooked venison   | 2 teaspoons nutmeg          |
| 1 pound beef suet         | 3 teaspoons allspice        |
| 6 pounds apples           | 3 teaspoons cinnamon        |
| 2 pounds currants         | 1/4 teaspoon ginger         |
| 1 pound light raisins     | 1 teaspoon cloves           |
| 2 pounds seedless raisins | 3 teaspoons salt            |
| 1 pound citron            | 2 oranges                   |
| 6 cups brown sugar        | 8 cups cider or grape juice |

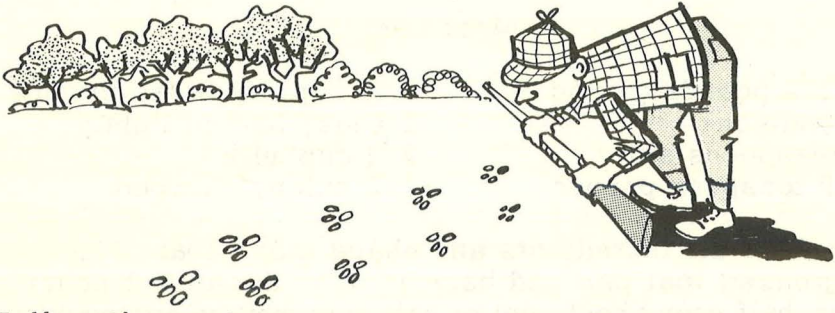
Chop or grind venison and suet. Mix with chopped apples, currants, raisins and citron. Add sugar, spices, juice of two oranges, finely chopped rind of one orange and the cider or grape juice. Simmer 30 minutes. Pack hot into jars. Seal and process pints and quarts at 10 pounds pressure for 20 minutes. Makes enough for 10 to 12 nine-inch pies.

## Small Game



Small game such as rabbit and squirrel should be cleaned and cooled as soon as possible. Bleeding is assured if the head is removed as soon as the animal is killed. Small animals are often field dressed while they are still warm.





Follow these steps:

1. Split the skin from chest to tail.
2. Carefully pull the skin loose from the stomach wall.
3. Cut the membrane without rupturing the entrails.
4. Spread the skin and remove the entrails.
5. Wipe out the cavity with clean paper, cloth or grass.

Squirrels and rabbits may be skinned in the field or after they are brought home. Skinning will be easier while the animals are still warm. Animals trapped for their fur should be skinned as soon as possible. Leave skins on animals that are transported for any distance or hung outside to age or freeze. The fur protects the meat against contamination and excessive drying.

Clean the gutted and skinned carcass thoroughly. Remove the small scent glands under the forelegs. These are generally pear-shaped, waxy kernels. They should not be cut or brought in contact with the meat. Cut out blood clots, mutilated tissues and all visible fat.

Rub the carcass with baking soda or a mild soap, and wash under running water. Drain and dry. A moist surface encourages mold and bacterial action. A poorly bled carcass should be soaked, before draining, in a weak brine solution (1/4 cup salt to 1 gallon of water) for several hours.

Chill game before cooking, or freeze for later use. Young tender animals can be broiled or fried like young tender chicken. Larger ones should be braised or stewed.

### Oven Grilled Rabbit

2 or 3 young rabbits	1/2 cup flour or crushed
1 clove garlic or 1 half	cereal
lemon or lime	1/2 cup cooking fat
Salt and pepper	

Cut rabbits in quarters. Rub pieces with garlic or lemon juice and let stand for 30 minutes. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and roll pieces in flour or crushed cereal. Place pieces in melted fat in bottom of 2-inch-deep baking dish. Bake at 375° for 30 minutes or until brown. Turn and bake 30 minutes longer. Remove and drain on absorbent paper.

### Smothered Rabbit

2 rabbits	1/4 cup fat
1 teaspoon salt	1/2 onion, sliced
1/8 teaspoon pepper	1 sprig parsley
Dash of paprika	1 cup top milk or light cream
1/2 cup flour	

Use older game, cut in pieces for serving. Dredge in seasoned flour and brown in fat in skillet or Dutch oven. Scatter onion and minced parsley over pieces. Add milk or cream and simmer over low heat or in a 325° oven for 1 1/2 hours or until tender. Remove pieces to heated platter and pour cream gravy over meat.

### Hassenzpfeffer

1/2 cup vinegar	1 medium onion, sliced
2 cups water	Small rabbit, cut in pieces
2 teaspoons salt	Flour
1/4 teaspoon pepper	3 tablespoons fat
1/2 teaspoon whole cloves	2 teaspoons Worcestershire
2 teaspoons sugar	sauce
4 bay leaves	3 tablespoons flour

Make pickling mixture by combining the vinegar, water, salt, pepper, cloves, sugar, bay leaves, and onion in a



glass or crockery bowl. Add pieces of rabbit and refrigerate for 8 to 12 hours. Turn the pieces occasionally so they will absorb the flavor evenly.

Remove the rabbit pieces and drain on absorbent paper. Save liquid and onions but discard bay leaves and cloves. Dredge meat in flour and brown in fat. Pour the pickling mixture over the rabbit. Add Worcestershire sauce to the liquid and thicken with 3 tablespoons flour mixed with a little cold water. Pour sauce over rabbit. Makes 4 servings.

### Broiled Squirrel

1 young squirrel	1/8 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon salt	Melted butter for basting

Cut squirrel in half and rub with salt and pepper. Brush with butter and broil. Baste and turn meat occasionally until well browned. Total broiling time will be about 45 minutes.

### Fricasseed Squirrel

1 squirrel, cut in pieces	3 slices bacon, chopped
1/2 teaspoon salt	1 tablespoon chopped
1/8 teaspoon pepper	onion
1/2 cup flour	2 teaspoons lemon juice
	1/3 cup water

Rub pieces with salt and pepper and roll in flour. Pan-fry with chopped bacon for 30 minutes. Add onion, lemon juice, and water and cover tightly. Cook slowly for 1 1/2 hours.

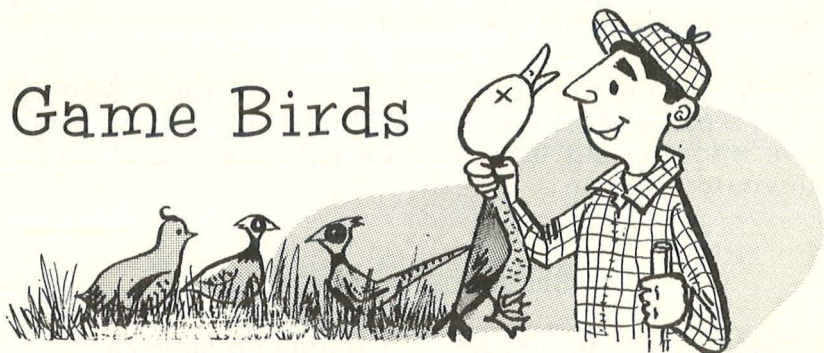
### Brunswick Stew

1 squirrel, cut in pieces	1 cup corn
1 teaspoon salt	1 cup lima beans
1/2 teaspoon pepper	2 potatoes, diced
2 cups water	2 cups tomatoes
1 small onion, chopped	1 teaspoon sugar



Season squirrel with salt and pepper. Simmer in water with onion about 2 hours. Add remaining ingredients and simmer 30 minutes or until vegetables are cooked. Add more salt and pepper if desired.

## Game Birds



Game birds should be drawn, cleaned and cooled as soon as possible. If left in a heated car, garage or basement they soon show signs of spoilage. A game strap is handy for transporting birds in the field. This also allows them to hang separately for quick cooling.

Birds may be drawn in the field. To do this, make a cut midway between vent and point of breastbone. Extend opening around the vent and remove the entrails in one mass. Place the giblets in a small bag. Wipe out the cavity with a clean cloth, leaves or grass. Hang the birds separately to cool.

Most hunters prefer to dry-pick game birds. The feathers should be pulled downward in the direction they grow. Pulling upward, or against the way they grow, tears the skin which is usually very tender. Cut out the oil gland at the base of the tail. Remove pinfeathers with a knife or tweezers. Singe the down with a lightly twisted piece of wrapping paper, being careful not to burn the skin. This can also be done by turning the bird slowly over a gas flame.

Some prefer to remove pin feathers by applying melted wax to the bird's body. Paint the wax on with a clean brush and cover the body liberally. When the wax is firm, scrape it off with a small paring knife tilted at a slight angle. Scrape gently. Singe the skin to remove any hairs and down that were missed in the scraping process.

Still others find it quicker and easier to skin game birds. Loosen the skin from in front and back of the legs. Cut the skin over the breast and up the back of the bird if necessary. A couple of firm yanks will separate the skin from the bird. Skinning is more difficult if the bird has been shot up or chewed by a dog.

Now cut off the head, feet and wing tips. Scrub the bird in a pan of cool water or under running water. Drain. Leave whole or cut into pieces. Refrigerate and cook as you would chicken.

### Smothered Pheasant

1 pheasant, cut in pieces	1 teaspoon paprika
1/2 cup flour	1/4 cup fat
1/2 teaspoon salt	1 cup light cream
1/8 teaspoon pepper	

Dip the pieces of pheasant in flour seasoned with salt, pepper and paprika. Brown in fat in heavy skillet. Add cream. Cover and simmer for 1 1/2 hours or bake in a 325° oven until pheasant is tender. Serve with gravy made from cream in pan. Makes 4 servings.

### Roast Pheasant

1 young pheasant	1 slice lemon
Salt and pepper	4 bacon slices
1 bay leaf	1 onion, sliced
1 clove garlic, crushed	1 can mushrooms
Few celery leaves	1 cup chicken broth

Sprinkle pheasant inside and out with salt and pepper. Place bay leaf, garlic, celery leaves and lemon slice in body cavity. Tie legs together and turn wings under. Cover the breast with bacon slices or cheesecloth soaked in melted butter. Put in shallow pan breast side up. Arrange onion and mushrooms around the bird. Pour chicken broth over pheasant and roast in 350° oven for 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Baste frequently.



## Baked Pheasant Loaf

4 cups ground cooked pheasant	1 1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup milk	1 small onion, chopped
1 cup chicken broth	2 eggs, beaten
	2 cups soft bread crumbs

Mix ingredients together lightly with a fork. Pour into greased loaf pan and bake at 375° for 1 hour. Slice and serve hot or cold. Garnish with sliced tomatoes or parsley.

## Wild Goose with Apricot Stuffing

1 young wild goose	1 cup chopped dried apricots
Juice of 1 lemon	3 cups soft bread crumbs
Salt and pepper	1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup butter	1/8 teaspoon pepper
1/4 cup chopped onion	4 to 6 slices bacon
1 cup chopped tart apple	Bacon drippings

Sprinkle goose inside and out with lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Melt butter in a large saucepan. Add onion and cook until tender. Stir in apple, apricots, bread crumbs, salt and pepper. Spoon stuffing lightly into cavity. Close opening with skewers and string. Cover breast with bacon slices and cheesecloth soaked in bacon drippings. Place goose, breast up, on rack in roasting pan. Roast in 325° oven for 2 1/2 to 3 hours. Baste frequently with pan drippings. If age of goose is uncertain, pour 1 cup water into pan and cover during the last hour of cooking.

## Roast Wild Duck

1 young duck	2 teaspoons salt
2 cups quartered apples	1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 slice onion	1 cup orange juice

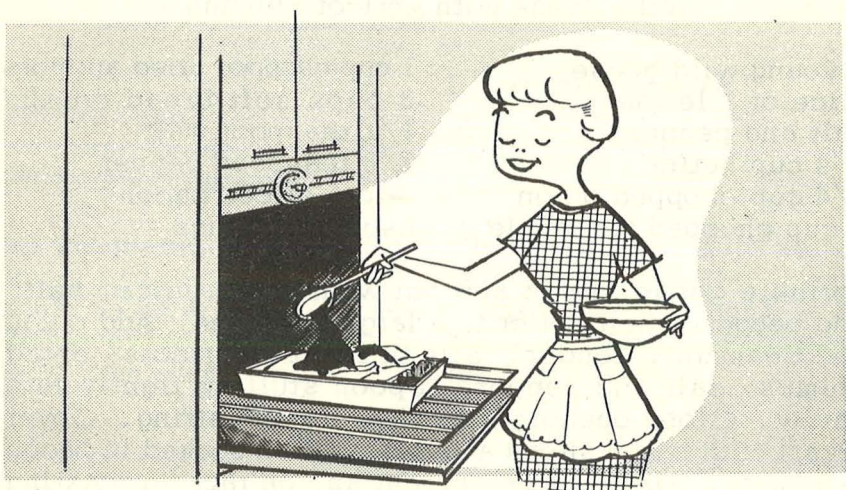
Fill cavity of duck with peeled quartered apples. Close with skewers and tie legs and wings close to body. Rub duck with slice of onion, then with salt and pepper. Roast uncovered in a 325° oven for 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Baste every 10 minutes with orange juice.



## Barbecued Duck

- |                                 |                             |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2 large wild ducks              | 2 tablespoons catsup        |
| 4 teaspoons lemon juice         | 1 tablespoon butter, melted |
| 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce | 1 teaspoon salt             |
|                                 | 1 teaspoon paprika          |

Place ducks in shallow pan in 325° oven. Combine other ingredients to use for basting. Roast 15 minutes then baste every 15 minutes. Total cooking time, 2 to 2 1/2 hours.



## Baked Prairie Chicken

- |                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 prairie chicken         | 1/2 teaspoon savory     |
| 1/4 cup flour             | Dash of thyme and basil |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt         | 1 slice bacon           |
| 1/4 teaspoon white pepper | 1/4 cup butter          |

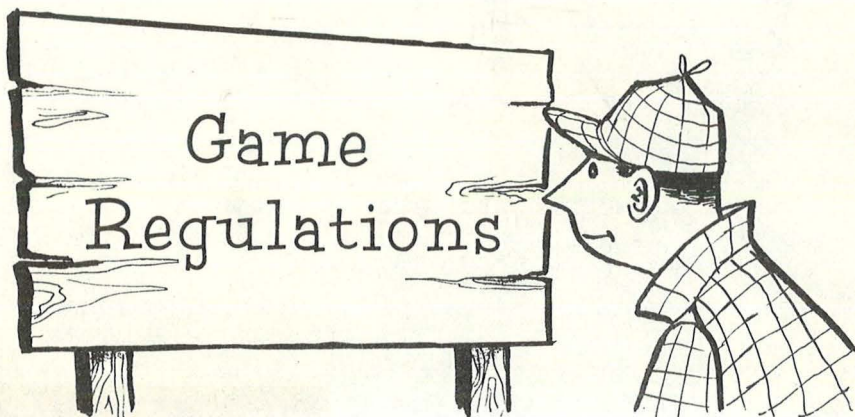
Dredge bird with flour, salt, pepper and savory. Sprinkle thyme and basil on strip of bacon, roll up and fasten with toothpick. Place bacon roll in body cavity and close the opening. Brown bird in melted butter in skillet. Transfer to baking dish. Cover and bake in 325° oven for 60 minutes or until tender. Make gravy with milk or light cream if desired.

## Braised Quail

4 quail  
Salt, pepper and flour  
1/4 cup bacon drippings  
1/2 cup milk

1 can condensed cream of  
celery soup  
1/2 cup chopped onion  
1/4 teaspoon caraway seeds

Sprinkle quail with salt, pepper and flour. Brown on all sides in bacon drippings in skillet. Add milk, soup, onion and caraway seeds. Cover and cook over low heat for 30 minutes, or until tender. Baste frequently with drippings in pan. Makes 4 servings.



Hunting, transporting and storing of game meats is governed by state regulations. These should be observed whenever game is handled. In Nebraska, frozen game must be used within a specified time. Large game such as deer or antelope should be used by December 31 of the following year in which it was killed. Small game such as pheasant and water fowl should be used within 90 days following the end of the hunting season.