

Americans may be surprised to learn that one of their favorite proteins, beef, provides several health benefits and is simple to prepare when each beef cut is matched to its correct cooking technique. So, fire up that grill or pre-heat that oven because we've got some surprising facts that are busting the myths about beef.

MYTH VS FACT

Myth #1: Beef consumption should be limited because it's bad for your heart and raises cholesterol.

FACT: Beef can be good for heart health. In fact, [research shows](#) that eating lean beef every day, as part of a heart-healthy diet and lifestyle, can lower LDL (bad) cholesterol levels by as much as 10 percent, comparable to any other recommended heart-healthy diet.¹ This research provides convincing support that nutrient-rich lean beef can be a regular part of a healthy diet. There are many healthy, lean beef choices that help reduce the risk of heart disease.^{1,2}

Myth #2: Americans already get too much protein.

FACT: Despite other changes in the way we eat, Americans have not increased their percentage of calories from protein in 30 years. Research shows that, on average, Americans consume 5.1 ounces of protein foods daily, which is within the [2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) recommendation of 5.5 ounces for the Protein Group.³ Many Americans could benefit from adding high-quality lean protein to their diets because of its beneficial role in weight management, healthy aging and disease prevention.⁴

Myth #3: Americans eat too much red meat, especially beef.

FACT: Americans are eating beef at levels that fit a variety of healthy eating patterns, which can meet the goals of the [2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). Americans are currently consuming 1.7 ounces of beef daily, well within the recommended amount of 5.5 ounces from the Protein

Group.⁵ Calorie-for-calorie, lean beef is one of the most [naturally nutrient-rich](#) foods, providing 10 essential nutrients including protein, zinc and B vitamins and less than 10 grams of fat per 3 ounce serving.²

Myth #4: Beef is the primary source of fat and cholesterol in the diet.

FACT: Beef contributes less than 10 percent of saturated fat and total fat in the diet,⁵ and contributes less cholesterol to Americans' diets (11%) compared to chicken (12%) and eggs (25%).³ Also, beef is considered a [primary source of monounsaturated fat](#) in the diet.⁶ Monounsaturated fat is the type of heart-healthy fat found in olive oil.

Myth #5: Lean cuts of beef are not easy to find in the grocery store.

FACT: Today's beef is leaner than ever, and 67 percent of all beef muscle cuts sold at grocery stores are lean.⁸ Popular cuts include Top Sirloin steak, Tenderloin, T-Bone steak and 93% lean Ground Beef.

Myth #6: Beef is difficult and time-consuming to prepare.

FACT: Preparing beef is easy using common ingredients and matching the right cooking method to the right cut. There are endless [culinary possibilities](#) for the many cuts of lean beef, offering variety and flexibility. Lean beef is a nutrient-rich protein that pairs perfectly with fruits, vegetables and whole grains. And, it can be easily integrated into a healthy and active lifestyle.

What is lean*?

- Less than 10 g total fat
 - Less than or equal to 4.5 g saturated fat
 - Less than 95 mg cholesterol
- Per 100 grams (3.5 oz)



*FDA Office of Nutrition, Labeling, and Dietary Supplements, Food Labeling Guide. October 2009 (www.fda.gov/FoodLabelingGuide)

Surprising Facts about Lean Beef

Build the Perfect Plate with Lean Beef

Now that we've sorted out the beef myths, it's time to take it to the plate with a delicious, nutritious lean beef recipe that can be prepared in 30 minutes or less. Here is an easy meal to whip up if you have lean Ground Beef and a few other common ingredients on hand.

Sweet & Tangy Sloppy Joes

Total Recipe Time: 20 to 25 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 pound Ground Beef (96% lean)
- 1 medium yellow, green or red bell pepper, chopped
- 3/4 cup finely chopped onion
- 1 can (11-1/2 ounces) regular or reduced-sodium spicy 100% vegetable juice
- 3 tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 4 whole or honey wheat hamburger buns or Kaiser rolls, split

Instructions

1. Heat large nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Add Ground Beef, bell pepper and onion; cook 8 to 10 minutes, breaking beef up into 3/4 inch crumbles and stirring occasionally.
2. Stir in vegetable juice, brown sugar and Worcestershire sauce; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, 7 to 9 minutes or until most of the liquid has evaporated and thickens slightly, stirring occasionally.
3. Evenly place beef mixture on bottom half of each bun; close sandwiches.



Cook's Tip: Cooking times are for fresh or thoroughly thawed Ground Beef. Ground Beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F. Color is not a reliable indicator of Ground Beef doneness.

Nutrition information per serving: 331 calories; 6 g fat (2 g saturated fat; 1 g monounsaturated fat); 65 mg cholesterol; 563 mg sodium; 43 g carbohydrate; 4.9 g fiber; 27 g protein; 7.2 mg niacin; 0.5 mg vitamin B₆; 2.1 mcg vitamin B₁₂; 4.6 mg iron; 39.2 mcg selenium; 6.3 mg zinc; 93.5 mg choline.

This recipe is an excellent source of fiber, protein, niacin, vitamin B₆, vitamin B₁₂, iron, selenium and zinc; and a good source of choline.

This and other lean beef recipes can be found on BeefNutrition.org

1. Roussel MA, et al. Beef in an Optimal Lean Diet study: Effects on lipids, lipoproteins, and apolipoproteins. Am J Clin Nutr 2012; 95(1):9-16.
2. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, USDA Nutrient Data Laboratory. 2012. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 25. Available at: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/search/>
3. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010. 7th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 2010.
4. Wolfe, R. The underappreciated role of muscle in health and disease. Am J Clin Nutr 2006; 84:475-82.
5. Zanovec M, et al. Lean beef contribute significant amounts of key nutrients to the diets of US adults: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 1999-2004. Nut Res 2010; 30:375-81.

6. National Cancer Institute. Table 1. Food sources of oleic acid (MFA 18:1), listed in descending order by percentages of their contribution to intake, based on data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2005-2006. Available at: http://riskfactor.cancer.gov/diet/foodsources/fatty_acids/table1.html.

7. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. U.S Food and Drug Administration. Federal Register Final Rule- 72 FR 1455 January 12, 2007: Food Labeling: Nutrient Content Claims, Expansion of the Nutrient Content Claim "Lean." Available at: <http://www.fda.gov/Food/LabelingNutrition/LabelClaims/NutrientContentClaims/ucm074942.htm>.

8. Freshlook Marketing Group, the leading U.S. source of grocery scanner data for meat and produce purchasing, 52 weeks ending 07/22/12.