

# Glamour for Ground Beef

Ground beef, that trusty rescuer of the desperate housewife and working girl, will probably be more expensive later this year if one is to believe all the reports from the USDA and the beef industry. For now it's still worth a prominent spot in your food budget.

It would be hard to find any other form of meat that can be used as successfully in as many ways as ground beef. By itself in patties or as a Salisbury steak, it cooks quickly, has a good flavor and makes a highly adequate meat dish for a simple meal. On the other hand, if you crumble it and combine it with well-seasoned tomato sauce, you'll have the filling for a crepe party dish.

There's one thing about ground beef that one should pay particular attention to when buying it. By law, ground beef can contain up to 30% fat. That's a lot of fat that will go to waste when cooked, so one must plan on a healthy amount of shrinkage or spend somewhat more and buy leaner ground beef.

Because ground beef, or hamburger if you prefer, is so handy to use, it's all too easy to get in a rut and fall back on one or two favorite recipes. For something different, why not try these suggestions?

Another interesting and unusual ground beef dish is a casserole that combines polenta and sweet Italian sausage with the ground beef in an all-in-one dish that needs only a crisp salad and maybe a nice glass of Chianti or some other red wine to turn it into an easy meal.

Here are recipes for a number of ground beef dishes that will help you break away from your usual "hamburger tonight" routine.

## POTATO BEEF SURPRISE

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 cup chopped celery
- 4 cups seasoned mashed potatoes, cooked fairly dry
- 2 eggs
- Flour
- 1 (3-ounce) can French-fried onion rings, crumbled
- 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- Oil for frying
- Mushroom Gravy

Brown ground beef with garlic and onion. Pour off excess fat. Add and saute celery. Combine mashed potatoes with 1 beaten egg, 1/4 cup flour and crumbled onion rings. Divide mixture into 6 portions. Roll each on floured board or flatten with floured hands. Place about 1/3 cup beef mixture on the center of one side of potatoes. Sprinkle with cheese then fold over other end of potatoes, sealing all sides. Handling potato patty with floured hands, dip in remaining beaten egg (use more eggs if needed) then dredge with flour. Fry on both sides in hot oil in skillet until golden brown. Serve hot with Mushroom Gravy. Makes 6 servings.

### Mushroom Gravy

- 2 tablespoons butter or bacon drippings
- 1/2 cup sliced mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 cup beef stock
- Salt, pepper

Heat butter and saute mushrooms. Blend in flour. Pour in stock, heating and stirring until smooth and thickened. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

## POLENTA CHILI BAKE

- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- 4 cups boiling water
- 1/2 pound sweet Italian sausage, casings removed
- 1/2 pound lean ground beef
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped green pepper
- 1 (1 1/2-ounce) package spaghetti sauce mix
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 (1-pound) can tomatoes
- 3/4 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1 (7-ounce) can pitted ripe olives, drained and halved

Stir cornmeal slowly into 4 cups boiling water. Cook until thick, stirring occasionally, about 30 minutes. Spread about half the mixture in an even layer in a greased 2-quart casserole. Pour remaining in a greased 9x5-inch loaf pan, then chill.

Combine sausage and ground beef. Shape into large chunks and brown in large skillet. Push to one side.

# Recipe Corner

Saute onion and green pepper in drippings in the center of pan. Add spaghetti sauce mix, chili powder and undrained tomatoes. Bring to boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Add 1/4 cup of the cheese and olive halves, reserving 12 olive halves for garnish. Pour mixture over cornmeal layer in casserole.

Turn chilled cornmeal layer into cutting board. Cut into 6 even-size pieces, then halve each diagonally to make 12 wedges. Arrange on top of meat mixture then sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup cheese.

Bake at 400 degrees 40 minutes or until bubbling hot. Garnish with remaining olive halves.

Makes 6 servings.

## DIANA'S SOUR CREAM DIP CASSEROLE

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1/2 to 1 cup sour cream onion dip (made with dry onion soup mix and sour cream)
- 1 cup cooked elbow macaroni
- 1/4 cup dry red wine
- 1 (8-ounce) can kidney beans
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Dash pepper
- 1/4 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

Brown ground beef, stirring to keep meat crumbly. Pour off excess fat. Add onion dip, macaroni, wine, beans, salt and pepper. Mix well and place in a casserole. Cover and bake at 350 degrees 45 minutes. Remove cover. Sprinkle cheese on top and return to oven 15 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

## POTATO-CROWNED CASSEROLE

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 teaspoon instant minced onion
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 (5-serving) envelope instant mashed potatoes
- 3 eggs

Brown beef, stirring to keep crumbly. Drain off drippings. Stir in tomato sauce, onion, vinegar, 1/2 teaspoon chili powder and salt. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Spoon into a 2-quart casserole.

Prepare potatoes according to package directions. Beat egg whites until stiff peaks form and beat yolks lightly. Stir yolks into potatoes, then fold in egg whites. Spread mixture over casserole and sprinkle with remaining chili powder. Bake at 350 degrees 40 to 50 minutes or until deep golden brown and puffed. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

## DILLY BEEF CASSEROLE

- 1 1/2 pounds ground beef
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon dill weed
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1 bouillon cube
- 1 cup hot water
- 1 (10-ounce) package frozen mixed vegetables
- 2 medium tomatoes, peeled and sliced 1/2 inch thick
- Dill weed

Cook ground beef and onion until beef is browned. Pour off drippings. Add salt, pepper, paprika, dill weed and flour. Mix well. Dissolve bouillon cube in hot water and add to meat mixture. Cook 5 minutes. Cook mixed vegetables in 1 cup unsalted water. Bring to a boil and cook 10 minutes. Drain vegetables, reserving cooking liquid and adding water to make 1 cup. Add cooked vegetables and liquid to meat mixture. Stir and place 1/2 of the meat mixture in 1 1/2-quart casserole. Add a layer of tomatoes, using 4 or 5 slices. Pour remaining meat mixture over sliced tomatoes. Top casserole with tomato slices. Sprinkle with additional dill weed. Bake at 375 degrees 25 to 30 minutes. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

by Dorothy Johnson

## SAUERBRATEN MEATBALLS

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1/4 cup fine dry bread crumbs
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- Dash pepper
- 2/3 cup evaporated milk
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 2 tablespoons catsup
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 8 peppercorns
- 1 bay leaf, crumbled
- 1/3 cup raisins
- 6 gingersnaps, crushed

Mix ground beef, bread crumbs, onion, 1 teaspoon salt, pepper and evaporated milk together. Shape into 12 meatballs. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add meatballs and brown evenly on all sides. While meatballs are browning, mix water, vinegar, catsup, sugar, peppercorns, bay leaf, 1/2 teaspoon salt, raisins and gingersnap crumbs. Add mixture to meatballs. Mix gently but thoroughly. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Cover and reduce heat. Simmer 15 minutes, stirring often. Cook 15 minutes longer. Makes 6 servings.

## MEATBALLS SMITANE

- 2 pounds ground beef
- 1 small onion, minced
- Dash nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- Flour
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1 pint sour cream

Mix beef with onion, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Form mixture into 1-inch balls and roll in flour. Saute meatballs in butter until browned on all sides. Cover and simmer slowly until meatballs are done, about 10 minutes. Remove meatballs from pan and drain off excess fat. Add sour cream and heat, scraping brown bits from bottom of pan. Serve sauce over meatballs. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

## Meatballs With Mushrooms

Prepare meatballs as for Meatballs Smitane, but slice 1/2 pound mushrooms and saute with meatballs. Do not remove mushrooms from pan with meatballs, but stir in sour cream and serve mushroom-sour cream sauce on meatballs.

## STUFFED BURGER BUNDLES

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 2 1/2 cups herb seasoned or corn bread stuffing mix
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Water
- Butter or margarine
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce with onions
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon rosemary

Combine ground beef, 1/2 cup stuffing mix, milk and salt and mix thoroughly. Shape meat into four 5-inch patties. Prepare remaining 2 cups stuffing mix with water and butter according to package directions. Mound 1/4 of the stuffing on each patty, then form meat into a ball around stuffing, pinching edges to seal completely. Place burger balls in a shallow baking dish and bake at 350 degrees 20 minutes. Pour off fat. Combine tomato sauce, 1/4 cup water, Worcestershire and rosemary and pour over meat. Bake 15 minutes. Makes 4 servings.

## HONEY BEE-F LOAF

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1/2 cup soft bread crumbs
- 1 egg
- 4 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

Combine ground beef, bread crumbs, egg, 2 tablespoons honey, 1 tablespoon soy sauce, salt, curry powder and pepper. Mix well. Shape into a loaf and place in a greased loaf pan. Combine remaining honey and soy sauce and brush over loaf. Bake at 350 degrees 1 hour. Makes 4 servings.