

# Food Safety

## GROUND VENISON

Venison – or deer meat – is a source of protein, vitamins, and minerals and is low in fat. Use these tips to keep you and your family food-safe while cooking with ground venison.

### Keeping Hands and Surfaces Clean

- Wash hands before and after touching raw venison.
- Wash cutting boards, cooking utensils, and other equipment that touch raw venison with soap and hot water.

### Storing Frozen Venison

- For best quality, keep venison frozen for 6 to 9 months.
- Freezers should stay at 0°F or colder.

### Thawing Frozen Venison

- Thaw ground venison safely in a refrigerator at 41°F or colder. Never thaw frozen venison at room temperature.
- Thaw frozen venison on the bottom shelf of a refrigerator on a plate to catch any spilled meat juices.

### Storing Thawed and Uncooked Venison

- Cook thawed, raw venison within 1 to 2 days.
- Store uncooked venison away from ready-to-eat foods:
  - Uncooked foods, such as fruit salad or coleslaw.
  - Already cooked foods, such as cooked green beans and mashed potatoes.



### Cooking with Venison

- Cook ground venison to an internal temperature of at least 160°F.

### Storing and Reheating Leftovers

- Reheat leftover recipes to 165°F in a microwave, stovetop, or oven.
- Refrigerate leftover recipes within 2 hours of cooking.
- Eat leftovers within 4 days or freeze for longer storage.
- For best quality, use frozen leftovers within 2 to 3 months.

### References

*Cooking Venison for Flavor and Safety*, Suzanne Driessen, University of Minnesota Extension, 2021

*Proper Care and Handling of Venison from Field to Table*, Catherine Nettles Cutter, Penn State Extension, 2020

*Game from Farm to Table*, United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, 2011