

MEAT



*one of the most important ingredients in
gastronomy*

traditional and modern recipes

Meat in Professional Cuisine: Classification, Processing, and Culinary Use

Meat is one of the most important ingredients in world gastronomy. For a professional chef, it represents not only the foundation of many traditional and modern recipes but also a raw material whose proper handling requires deep knowledge, technical precision, and respect for both the ingredient and the customer.

Classification of Meat

In professional kitchens, meat is categorized according to several criteria:

By Animal Type

- **Beef** (cow, bull, veal)
- **Pork** (domestic pig)
- **Poultry** (chicken, turkey, duck, goose)
- **Lamb and Mutton** (sheep, lambs)
- **Game** (venison, deer, wild boar, pheasant, hare)
- **Veal** (meat from young calves up to about 8 months old)

By Part of the Animal (example: beef)

Front section

- Shoulder, neck, brisket (tougher meat, suitable for stewing and boiling)

Hind section

- Round, sirloin, tenderloin (more tender meat, suitable for roasting and quick cooking)

By Age of the Animal

Young meat

- More tender, shorter cooking time (e.g., veal, chicken)

Older meat

- Stronger flavor, requires longer cooking (e.g., beef shank)



Meat Processing in the Kitchen

Butchering and Cutting

Breaking down meat into specific cuts (so-called *primal cuts*) is the foundation of professional preparation. Each cut has unique characteristics – for example, pork tenderloin is delicate and ideal for quick cooking, while pork belly is fatty and perfect for long, slow roasting or confit.

Aging of Meat

Aging significantly affects the flavor, texture, and tenderness of the meat.

Dry-aging

- Meat matures in specially controlled conditions with low humidity and air circulation for 14 to 60 days. The result is an intense flavor and exceptional tenderness.

Wet-aging

- Meat is sealed in vacuum packaging and matures in its own juices. This process is shorter and more economical.

Marinating and Curing

Marinating enhances flavor and tenderizes the meat. In professional kitchens, marinades may be acidic (vinegar, wine, citrus), oil-based, herbal, or fermented. The correct marinade time and temperature are crucial.





Heat Treatment of Meat

The correct choice of cooking method determines the final taste experience. Each type and cut of meat requires a different approach.

Most Common Techniques:

Boiling

Suitable for front cuts (shank, brisket), also used for broths and soups.

Braising

• Combines searing and slow cooking in liquid, ideal for tougher cuts with more collagen.

Roasting

• Used for whole pieces or slices of meat (e.g., pork roast, duck, or beef roast beef).

Grilling and Searing

Quick cooking at high temperatures, ideal for steaks, chops, and burgers.

Frying

In oil or fat, popular for schnitzels and quick dishes.

Sous-vide

Modern technique of slow vacuum cooking at low temperature, resulting in juicy and perfectly tender meat.

Confit

Slow cooking of meat in fat (e.g., duck leg).

Culinary Uses of Meat by Type

Beef

- Tenderloin – steaks, tartare, quick preparation
- Sirloin – roasting, grilling, braising
- Shin – goulash, broths, ragout
- Neck, brisket – boiling, soups

Pork

- Tenderloin – grilling, frying, quick dishes
- Chops and pork neck – roasting, grilling, frying
- Shoulder and leg – roasts, braising
- Belly – slow roasting, confit

Poultry

- Chicken – universal use
- Duck, goose – traditional roasts, confit
- Turkey – diet cuisine

Lamb

- Chops, loin – grilling, roasting
- Leg – roasting, braising, ragou

Game

- Roe deer loin, venison leg – roasting, steaks
- Wild boar shoulder – sauces, ragout, goulash

Hygiene and Safety When Working with Meat

Professional kitchens must follow strict rules:

- Chilling raw meat at 0–4 °C, frozen at -18 °C.
- Separate work surfaces and utensils for raw and cooked foods.
- Internal meat temperature during heat treatment is key for safe consumption:
 - Poultry: min. 74 °C
 - Beef steak medium rare: approx. 63 °C
 - Ground meat: min. 70 °C



Knowledge of Meat

Understanding the different types of meat, their cuts, processing methods, and cooking techniques is a fundamental competence of every professional chef. Quality meat deserves the right approach – from butchering, marinating, and aging to precise cooking.