

Tomorrow's
bodybuilding
staple for
beefing up is
lower in fat,
cholesterol
and calories
than regular
beef. It's not
a common
name yet, but
get used to
asking for . . .

BEEFALO

A MEAT LOVER'S DREAM

BY
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KRUMM

MANAGING EDITOR
Photographed by Robert Reiff

Gold Crown —
Beefalo Bull



Ralph — Bison
Hybrid Bull



B

eeefalo. It's five-eighths beef

and three-eighths buffalo — but it's not something you mix up in your food processor. It's one big, lean animal bred especially for its low-fat, higher-nutrition meat and its ruggedness.

If saturated fat and cholesterol have scared you away from regular beef, with beefalo you can have your beef and your healthy physique too.

Not only is beefalo lower in fat, cholesterol and calories than regular beef, but it also doesn't seem to raise low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) levels the way beef does. LDL-C is associated with atherosclerosis and an increased risk of coronary heart disease.

A study at Central Washington University, published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, found no increase in subjects' LDL-C after a period of eating beefalo, while levels increased after the subjects ate beef. The subjects, selected because they had high blood cholesterol (hypercholesterolemia), consumed 8 ounces of ground meat (either beef or beefalo) five days a week during the study period. Both the beef and beefalo came from the same primal cut (round and chuck) and were similar in fat content (12–13%). However, the beefalo, in this case a 25% bison hybrid, was thought

to have a lower palmitic acid content (thus would have less of an LDL-C-raising effect), say researchers Linda A. Towle, MS, RD, and colleagues.

Along with being lower than beef in things we want less of (fat, saturated fat and cholesterol), beefalo is higher in certain desirable nutrients — including protein. (See "Is Beefalo Better?" for details.)

Now for the key question: What's beefalo taste like? We sampled steaks, rib roast and ground meat and liked all three (the steaks especially). Our beefalo tasted like lean beef, mostly tender but some sections were a little chewy, although nothing like certain lean cuts of regular beef, which can be tough. We couldn't discern any buffalo flavor in our steak and roast (although we wouldn't have minded since we like buffalo meat too). Plain ground beefalo tasted different from regular ground beef, but no difference was noted in the spicy dishes using ground beefalo.

Our meat came from Bear Claw Cattle Co. of Dayton, Wyoming, where it was raised naturally

(Continued on page 262)

IS BEEFALO BETTER?

Nutrient (per 100 grams of cooked meat)	Regular Beef	Beefalo
Protein	27.33 g	30.66 g
Calcium	9 mg	24 mg
Iron	2.73 mg	3.05 mg
Potassium	323 mg	459 mg
Niacin	3.68 mg	4.89 mg
Calories	273	188
% Calories from fat	57	30
Total fat	17.37 g	6.32 g
Saturated	6.85 g	2.68 g
Monounsaturated	7.41 g	2.68 g
Polyunsaturated	0.63 g	0.2 g
Cholesterol	87 mg	58 mg

Beefalo

Continued from page 104

on the open range, and fed only minimal amounts of grain.

We're ready to run down to the supermarket and buy more — but beefalo isn't readily available in most supermarkets — yet. For now it's a specialty product available at limited outlets or by mail order. To find your nearest outlet, call Livestock Research and Innovation at 1-800-683-6723 (from outside the United States, 307-638-4608). As public demand for beefalo increases, we expect it to become more readily available.

Cost varies, but at retail outlets it's 20–40% more than regular beef — comparable to other specially grown lean beef but cheaper than buffalo. Mail-order prices could be lower or higher than retail. Although beefalo costs more, health-conscious meat lovers might feel it's worth it. □

To contact Bear Claw Cattle Co., call 1-800-306-7444 or write PO Box 99, Dayton, Wyoming 82836.

THE ULTIMATE BREED?

Take a cow and a buffalo. Mate their offspring (50% bison/50% bovine, called a bison hybrid), with another bovine for a beefalo (25% bison). Then mate that beefalo with another bison hybrid (50/50) for a "fullblood beefalo," defined as having 37.5% bison genetics.

Or you can mate a buffalo (100% bison genetics) with a 50% bison hybrid for a 75% bison hybrid (such as Ralph, pictured earlier in the article), then mate that animal with a bovine to produce a fullblood beefalo (37.5% bison genetics, such as Gold Crown).

Mathematically it works out, but the process of breeding hybrids isn't that simple, says Paul Butler of Livestock Research and Innovation, a beefalo research and marketing organization located in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The greater the genetic diversity between a bull and cow, as with the original bovine and buffalo

pairing, the less chance of successful mating that produces fertile offspring.

But patience paid off for the original beefalo, or cattalo, breeders, and highly fertile beefalo are available for breeding and integrating bison genetics into regular cattle herds. Any percentage of bison genetics from 18.75% to 37.5% is considered beefalo, so the offspring of a bovine and a fullblood beefalo is a beefalo and provides beefalo beef.

Originally, cattle breeders sought to add bison genetics to bovine herds to allow for more economic meat production despite severe weather conditions. Nowadays consumers are more concerned with improved nutrition and good taste, although producers must still be concerned with economics. The bison genetics cuts the overall fat content, the saturated fat content and the cholesterol of the meat way down and increases desirable nutrients, compared with regular beef.

Although sometimes shaggy, the beefalo looks more like cattle than buffalo. It still has a thick buffalolike pelt that keeps it warm, so the animal doesn't need as much fat for insulation, thus has less fat in its meat. As with any other lean beef, beefalo meat needs less cooking time than regular varieties, and overcooking can destroy the good taste.

If bison genetics are so great for taste and nutrition, why not go for the real thing — buffalo itself? From a practical perspective, beef producers can't just switch from cattle to buffalo. Buffalo (or American bison) have rebounded from near extinction and some large herds now exist, but their numbers are nowhere near the levels of beef cattle. Beefalo bulls and cows are now available for ranchers and farmers who want to add bison genetics to their herds, without the expense of purchasing buffalo or of higher-risk crossbreeding between bison and bovine. As with much livestock breeding, beefalo genetics is also available without all the bull. Beefalo are compatible with any other breed of cattle.



RECIPES

BEEFALO KEBABS & NEW POTATOES

1 lb. beefalo steak, in cubes
Vegetable chunks (squash, onions or pearl onions, mushrooms, etc.)
8–10 new potatoes, parboiled till cooked but still firm

Marinade:

1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
½ cup red wine vinegar
1 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
1 clove garlic, sliced or minced
¼ onion, chopped
1 tsp. Grey Poupon or other gourmet mustard

Mix marinade. Set aside one-third for the meat. Slice potatoes in half, then mix into marinade and marinate in refrigerator two hours.

Just before cooking, assemble beefalo and vegetables on skewers, then place in remaining marinade for 10–15 minutes. Spray grill with nonstick cooking spray. Cook kebabs quickly over a medium-hot grill. Remember that well-done beefalo is light pink, rare is bright pink until meat is removed from the heat.

Makes 4 servings. The marinated potatoes can be cooked on the grill at the same time, for about five minutes. Per serving: 332 calories, 30 g protein, 40 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat.



BEEFALO STIR-FRY

1 lb. boneless beefalo sirloin
2 Tbsp. marinade (such as light soy sauce, Allegro or your favorite marinade)
1 carrot, diagonally sliced
1 stalk celery, diagonally sliced
1 small onion, sliced
½ green or red pepper, sliced (optional)

¾–1 cup pea pods or 4 oz. sliced water chestnuts

1–2 Tbsp. peanut oil

¼ head bok choy or similar vegetable

Seasonings (1 tsp. fresh grated gingerroot, or ½ tsp. ground ginger, or ½ tsp.

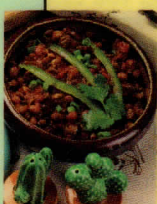
Chinese five-spice seasoning)

Advance preparation: Freeze meat briefly for easier slicing, then slice very thin on the diagonal. Mix meat with marinade, then chill about one hour.

Heat oil in wok. Stir-fry carrot, celery and onion for 2–3 minutes. Push up side of wok, or remove from wok. Stir-fry beefalo strips 2–3 minutes or until browned, then add additional seasonings. Stir in pea pods or water chestnuts and bok choy, cover and simmer 1–2 minutes. Vegetables should remain crisp.

Serve over rice or noodles.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving (with ¾ cup rice or 1 cup noodles): 420 calories, 32 g protein, 42 g carbohydrate, 13 g fat.



BEEFALO CHILI

1 lb. ground or coarsely chopped beefalo
1 onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, pressed (or ¼ tsp. garlic powder, added later with other spices)

16 oz. canned, chopped tomatoes

16 oz. canned kidney or pinto beans (or chili beans, for added seasoning)

2 cups tomato juice

1–2 tsp. chili powder

½ tsp. cumin

Sauté beefalo in nonstick Dutch oven, adding onion and garlic when meat is browned, then cooking a minute or two more. Add other ingredients, stir and simmer 1–2 hours.

Makes 4 hearty servings. Per serving: 348 calories, 36 g protein, 37 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat.

BEEFALO COOKING GUIDELINES

Beefalo cooks much quicker than regular beef since it has less fat to insulate the meat from the heat. This also means less shrinkage. Use your favorite beef recipes but do not overcook.

1) Beefalo cooks 20–30% faster than regular beef. A different fiber structure as well as low fat contribute to this factor. Well-done beefalo is light pink; rare is bright pink during cooking, but the pink disappears in a few minutes once removed from the heat. Always cook beefalo rarer than you cook regular beef.

2) Start beefalo in a hot pan or oven, turn to low and finish cooking. Use nonstick pans or nonstick sprays if necessary.

3) **STEAKS** (1-inch thick): Fry (in nonstick skillet — don't add fat) or grill for four minutes per side for medium to rare. Keep your eye on beefalo steaks. A steak may change from rare to medium in only one minute of cooking time.

4) **BEEFALO BURGERS** (thick patties): Cook 3½ minutes per side for medium rare.

5) **POT ROAST**: After searing on all sides and edges, cover and add liquid for oven cooking.

6) **ROAST**: Use your meat thermometer, cooking at 350 degrees until the internal temperature of the roast reaches 140–150. If you don't have a meat thermometer, cook about two hours for a 4-pound roast.

7) Beefalo continues cooking longer after it's removed from heat.

8) *Don't overcook beefalo.*

Beefalo is tasty with little or no salt or pepper added. This way you get the full benefit of a natural flavor.

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