

# BRAISING CONSUMER TIPS

Braising is a moist heat cooking method used to cook less tender cuts of beef. Moist heat and slow simmering in a tightly covered pan result in succulent, fork-tender meat. The slow extended cooking process actually helps develop the flavor of the beef. And it's simple — just brown the beef, add liquid and simmer gently. No peeking, turning or stirring is necessary!



## SMART SHOPPING WHICH CUTS?

Economical less tender beef steaks, from the more heavily exercised chuck and round sections, are best suited for braising. They include **eye round**, **bottom round**, **shoulder**, **chuck 7-Bone**, **chuck eye**, **chuck mock tender**, **chuck arm** and **chuck blade steaks**.

## HOW MUCH TO BUY?

- Steaks for braising will yield about 3 three-ounce servings of cooked, trimmed beef per pound.



## COOKING TIPS PREPARE THE STEAK PROPERLY BEFORE COOKING:

- To preserve juiciness, leave a thin layer of fat on steaks. Trim fat after cooking.
- Pat steaks dry with paper toweling to promote browning.
- Add salt and salty seasonings *after* browning. Salt added before cooking draws out moisture and inhibits browning.
- Lightly coat steaks with flour, seasoned with salt, pepper and herbs, before cooking, if desired. The coating helps seal in flavor and moisture and is especially suitable with lean beef round steaks.

## BRAISING BASICS:

- Brown steaks slowly, over medium heat, to develop rich color and flavor. Use a heavy pan and small amount of oil.
- Brown steaks in batches, if necessary. Overcrowding inhibits browning and promotes steaming and uneven cooking.
- Use a small amount of liquid — 1/2 to 2 cups is usual. Good choices include water, broth, wine, beer, fruit or vegetable juice, or a combination.
- Bring liquid to a boil, then quickly reduce heat to a level that just maintains a slow simmer.
- Cover pan tightly to retain the steam that will tenderize the steak. Don't lift the cover unnecessarily to turn steak or to stir.
- Simmer gently. Low heat keeps beef moist and promotes tenderness. Boiling will dry and toughen the steak.
- Steaks may be braised on top of the stove or in a preheated 325°F oven.
- Pan juices from braising are very flavorful. Thicken them with flour or cornstarch, or cook over medium-high heat to reduce to sauce consistency, and serve with steak.



## DETERMINING DONENESS

- Simmer until steak is fork-tender. To test, insert a utility fork into thickest part of steak. When the fork can be inserted without resistance and then releases easily when pulled out, the steak is done.
- As a guideline, 1-inch thick chuck and round steaks take about 1-3/4 hours to tenderize.
- Don't overcook. Cooking beyond the fork-tender stage can result in dry, stringy beef.