



NEWS RELEASE

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Take a bite of bison today

*By Lt. Col. Karen E. Hawkins,
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FORT LEE, Va. – Tender and juicy, bison meat makes a great burger, steak or chili, while being low in fat and high in protein. Think of bison, and you might picture a herd of them peacefully grazing away on the prairie. This is actually true as bison are grass-fed, with very little time spent feeding on grain in a feedlot. To make the meat even more appealing, federal regulations prohibit the use of artificial growth hormones in bison. Bison often has a sweeter flavor and a deeper red color than beef before cooking, because there is no marbling in it.

Good for you and your budget

The nutritional makeup of bison is excellent in comparison to other meats and some fish. Lower in fat, higher in protein, lower cholesterol content, higher in iron, and higher in vitamin B-12, as recognized by the National Bison Association, it is sure to please the health-conscious and the meat-and-potatoes crowd alike. To make it even more enjoyable and affordable, you can buy bison at your commissary at significant savings of 30 percent or more. Bison can be used in almost any dish in place of other meats. Have a favorite chili, casserole or taco recipe? Try making it with bison instead of ground beef and save up to 15 grams fat and 120 calories per serving.

Cook it slowly

To help bison stay moist and delicious, cook it slowly at a low temperature. It can dry out quickly, as there is little fat in it. The National Bison Association recommends cooking it to medium doneness. However, it can be cooked to well-done without losing flavor, if cooked with moist heat, as in a crock pot.

Since it is very lean and lacks fat marbling, bison can cook faster than other red meats. The U.S. Department of Agriculture offers the following cooking tips:

- Care should be taken to not overcook bison.
- In general, bison should be cooked using low heat (325 degrees Fahrenheit) and longer cooking times.
- Braising or other moist cooking methods are recommended for bison roasts and steaks.
- For thin-sliced bison, use quick-cooking methods such as broiling and pan frying.
- For safety, cook ground bison meat to 160 F.
- Roasts, steaks and chops should be loosely covered with foil and braised for one hour; internal temperatures should read 145 F (medium-rare), 160 F (medium), or 170 F (well-done).
- Less tender cuts should be braised (roasted or simmered with a small amount of liquid in a tightly covered pan) or stewed.

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Also Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on <http://www.twitter.com> and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support*

element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.