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Venison  
Michigan State University Extension Service  
Paul M. Barrett, Land Use and Conservation  
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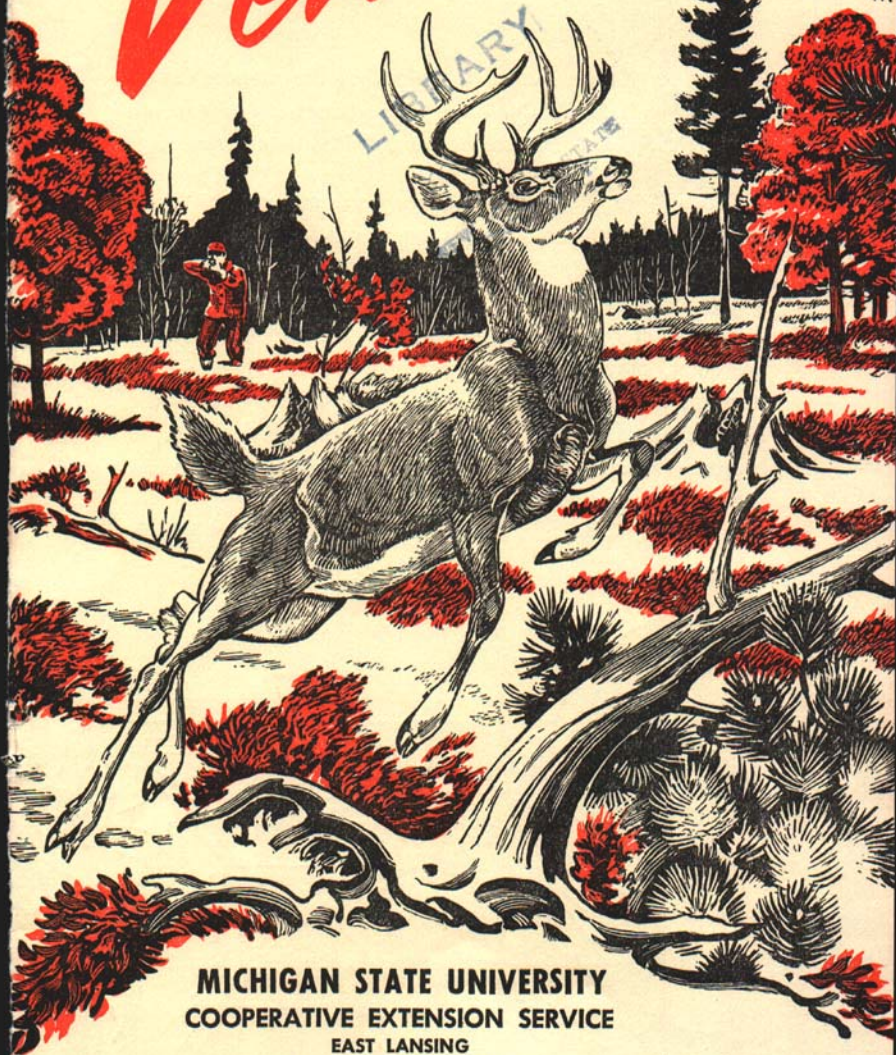
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# Venison



**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE  
EAST LANSING**

in cooperation with  
**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION**

# DEER HUNTING

Our forefathers hunted to help keep the pioneer family supplied with food. But times have changed. Now we go hunting more for the recreation it provides than for meat.

Today's hunting trip is the city man's opportunity to get close to nature, to enjoy the laughter and fellowship of congenial companions, to retard the pace of life by a return to simple ways of living — if just for a few days. Where is there a hunter who does not thrill to the winter beauty of the quiet, snow-trimmed forest and brook? Then, — the startling glimpse of a grey-coated buck in the thicket, the flash of his white flag as he turns to bound away and the breathless wait to catch him over the gun-sights in the opening you hope he will hit!



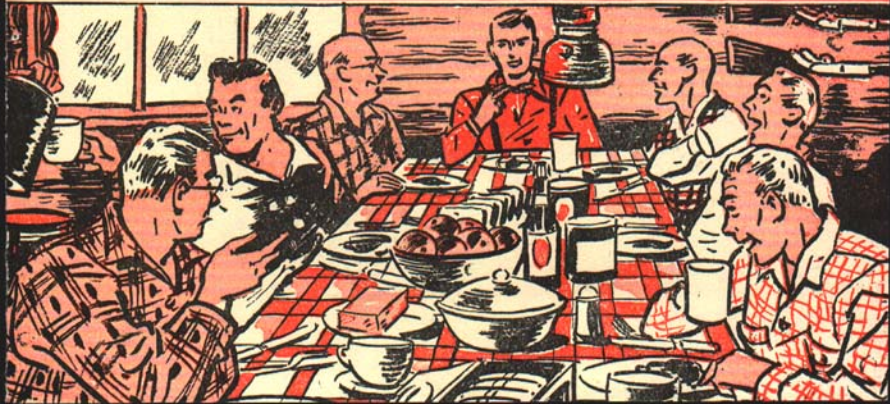
# for Fun and Food

Yes, Michigan's deer herd is the source of unmatched recreation, — balm for tense strung nerves. But it can also furnish a palatable and nutritious addition to our living. So plan this year's hunt with the idea of bringing home and using one of Michigan's finest wild grown foods — of following through by giving your deer the care, from forest to table, that will insure many delicious and appetizing meals for the family.

The purpose of this booklet is to encourage complete and satisfactory use of the venison taken this year. It offers suggestions that will help the hunter to bring his deer home in good condition and furnishes the housewife a number of tested recipes for preserving, cooking and serving venison.

L. R. SCHOENMANN\*

*\*Deceased April 1952. Former Director, Department of Land and Water Conservation, Michigan State University.*



# Important Things About DEER HUNTING

By PAUL M. BARRETT\*



1. COME HOME SAFELY
2. HAVE A GOOD TIME
3. BRING HOME A DEER

Your rifle is a deadly weapon — handle it with that in mind at all times.

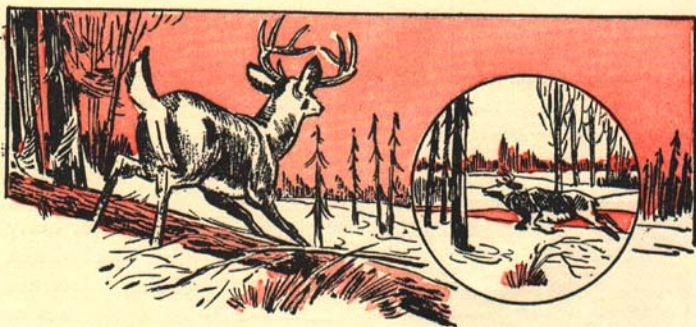
Look carefully before you shoot — be sure the target is a deer — be sure it's a legal deer.

One well-placed shot is more effective than a dozen fired at random.

Follow up your deer. A fatally wounded buck may bound away, apparently unhurt, and fall over dead just out of sight.

*\*Extension Specialist in Land Use and Conservation, Michigan State University and State Department of Conservation cooperating.*





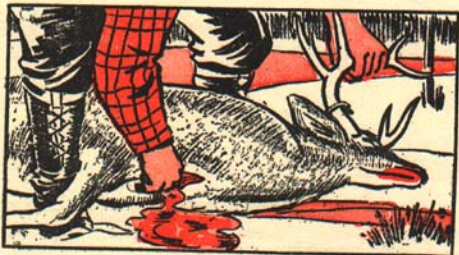
## When You Have Killed Your Deer

Be sure he is dead — shoot again through the neck rather than take chances. A shot through the jugular vein (half way between ear and throat) will help bleed him.

Fasten your seal.

Perhaps your shot severed enough arteries and veins to bleed your deer sufficiently — and maybe it didn't. It is suggested that unless he has been shot through the chest or unless dead several minutes before finding, you take time to bleed your deer. Swing carcass around so that neck and shoulders are lower than rump. The best place for sticking is at the base of the neck where it joins the chest. Stand in back, or close to body — keep away from those feet, he may not be so dead as you think.

Insert knife 4 or 5 inches and cut sideways to sever veins. Keep open and free from clots. The more blood drained out, the better the meat will keep.



Dress out deer immediately — roll up your sleeves and go to work!

Roll deer over on its back, rump lower than shoulders, and spread hind legs. Tie one hind foot to a tree if you are alone or have difficulty in keeping deer in position.



Make cut along centerline of belly from back to chest cavity to within about 6 inches of tail. Cut through hide first, then through belly muscle. Avoid puncturing paunch or

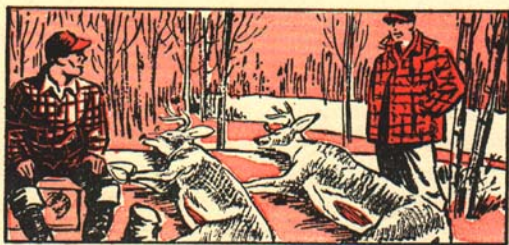
intestines by holding them back with back of hand and guiding knife between first two fingers, cutting edge up.

Cut through diaphragm (thin muscle separating chest from stomach cavity), reach in chest cavity with knife in right hand and cut windpipe ahead of lungs. A steady pull with left hand will help to roll out the lungs, heart, liver, paunch and intestines. Take a small sharp blade and cut around anus and draw it back so as to make it come free with intestines. To aid in removal of digestive tract and other organs, you may wish to split the pelvic bone with an ax. This separation of hind quarters will also help in cooling carcass.

Dressing out a deer isn't much of a job, or a messy one unless the animal is shot up badly. Anyway, do it promptly and carefully. Save the heart and liver for camp meat.



There is a lot of satisfaction in making a good clean kill, and in doing a workmanlike job of dressing and cleaning your



game. Take your time, and a few minutes extra, to make sure you have removed all of the lungs, every bit of intestine, and all foreign material.

A high-powered rifle bullet or shotgun slug can tear up a lot of meat. You can avoid almost all loss if you take care of carcass immediately. Separate hide from the wound area, cut away all meat affected by the shot (all that is blood-shot) — take plenty and save it. Put this meat in cold water with a little salt and let stand overnight to draw out blood. Drain, dry, and chop up for deerburgers in camp.



Cool out carcass as quickly and thoroughly as possible. Best way is to hang in shade where there is a good circulation of air. Prop flanks open with a stick 8 or 10 inches long, sharpened at both ends. Clear opening, where you stuck the deer for bleeding, to let warm air out of chest cavity. Clear opening through vent to allow drainage — this is very important. Wipe inside of cavity with clean dry cloth. Don't use water unless paunch or intestines are badly shot up.

Most of the strong, disagreeable flavor in venison is due to inadequate bleeding, delay or carelessness in dressing, failure to cool promptly and thoroughly, or blood from a shot wound spreading along the membrane between the muscles.

Hang either end up.

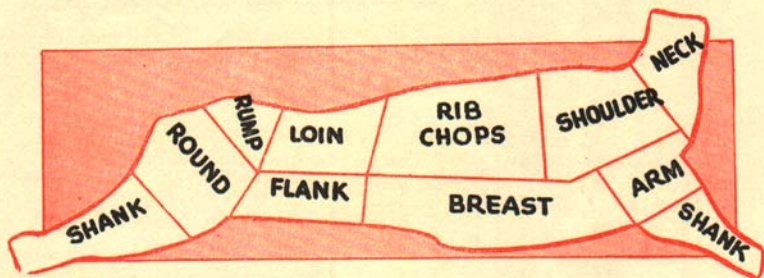


## Cutting Up The Carcass

Cutting the carcass into convenient pieces for cooking or preserving isn't difficult if you have equipment, a place to work, and an idea as to how to proceed. If you lack any one of these, it may be much more satisfactory to have your butcher do the job for you. This will certainly be the case if you have your deer frozen, and incidentally, refrigerator storage is about the most satisfactory way of preserving venison.

If you decide to cut up the carcass yourself, the first job is to remove the hide. After skinning, spread hide, flesh side up and sprinkle with four or five handfuls of salt. This will accumulate considerable moisture in a day or two which should be wiped off, the hide dried, and fresh salt put on for further curing. If you plan to have the hide tanned for your own use, roll into tight bundle, hair outside, attach tag from your license and send promptly to taxidermist. Many useful articles can be made from buckskin and the pleasure from deer hunting can be extended by full use of the hide.

Hang carcass by hocks with a spreader and proceed to saw in half down the back bone. A common handsaw will be satisfactory. Take one-half at a time and cut into pieces as indicated by lines in the outlines of pictures below. With a good, sharp knife, a saw or a cleaver and a little care you can do a satisfactory job in your home.



Trim off all discolored bloodshot parts — now. Soak in salt water overnight and use them immediately.

## Cuts of Venison



### HIND AND FORE SHANK

The shank is used for soups, stews and ground for meat loaf and "deerburgers."



### ROUND

The round is usually tender and makes good steaks. If tough, it may be used for swiss steaks. When the leg is small, it may be roasted, such as a leg of lamb, all in one piece in an uncovered pan. Ground meat may also be made from the round to fry as meat patties or used in meat loaf.



### LOIN

This is the place to get sirloin and porterhouse steaks or choice roasts.



### SHOULDER OR CHUCK

This is very good for pot roasts or ground meat. It may also be used for corning or canning, as described on last page.



### RUMP

This is used for pot roast. If from a tender, young buck, it makes a very good uncovered oven roast. Also may be used for corning or canning.

### NECK, FLANK AND BREAST

The neck is tender after tendons are removed. It may be used as a stew or as ground meat, and believe it or not, makes good roasts.

The flank and breast contain considerable meat. They may be ground for deerburgers, or used for soup or a stew. They are too good to waste.

# How To Cook Venison

Venison is among the most highly prized of all wild game. If properly dressed and cared for in the woods by the hunter, it is free from objectionable and so-called game flavors. Unpleasant experiences with venison on the table are usually due to lack of care before it reaches the kitchen. However, good cooking is important in making venison appetizing — and it can be as good as the best meat from the butcher. It is hoped that the suggestions and recipes given here will help venison gain and hold the high standing it deserves.



## Flavor of Venison

It should not be necessary to make any attempt to conceal the flavor of venison. The characteristic flavor seems to be concentrated in the fat and if strong, trimming away excess fat will help. However, venison is a rather dry meat and is improved by addition of suet, butter or other fat when using dry heat methods — roasting, broiling, and frying.

The standard methods of meat cooking for beef and lamb are most successful for venison. Even though you do get a deer that is tough or has a strong flavor, there are ways of preparing it for the table that will make it palatable and appetizing. Recipes and methods for cooking tough cuts are given, and use of bacon, vegetables and fruit juices is suggested to impart a different flavor. Spices such as bay leaf, thyme, garlic, savory and the like may be added to suit your taste.

## General Methods

There are two general methods of cooking meat: *Dry Heat* for tender cuts and *Moist Heat* for the less tender cuts. Meat recipes are all variations of one method or the other. There are any number of variations and seasonings that can be used to meet the individual tastes.



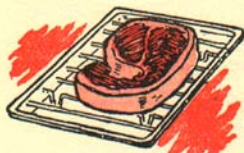
## Dry Heat Methods (For Tender Cuts)

### — ROASTING (round, loin, shoulder)

1. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Place on rack in uncovered pan, fat side up.
3. Do not add water — do not cover.
4. Extra fat may be added to venison. Bacon strips or beef suet may be laid across the top.
5. Roast in slow oven (300° - 350° F.), allowing 20 - 25 minutes per pound. Turning the roast aids uniform cooking.



### BROILING (steaks and chops)



1. Preheat the broiling oven.
2. Place steaks or chops on the broiling rack with top surface 3 inches below source of heat.
3. Broiler door should be open unless directions of range advise otherwise. Lower flame or heat if meat smokes or throws grease into flame.
4. Broil on one side until nicely browned and then turn to other side. For a 1-inch steak, the time required will be 7 to 10 minutes for each side.
5. Season with salt and pepper, add butter and serve at once.  
(Try broiling in your fireplace over a bed of glowing coals.)

### PANBROILING — frying (steaks and chops)

1. Heat a heavy frying pan until it is sizzling hot.
2. A little butter added to the pan improves the flavor — otherwise rub the pan with a little suet or small amount of fat. Place the meat in the hot pan.
3. Brown both sides — turning only once.
4. For thick chops or steaks reduce heat after browning to finish cooking clear through meat.



## Moist Heat Methods (For Less Tender Cuts)



### BRAISING (shoulder, neck, breast)

1. Season with salt and pepper, rub with flour.
2. Brown on all sides in hot fat.
3. Add a small quantity of water (about one cup).
4. Cover closely.
5. Cook *very slowly* until tender. Turn the meat occasionally. Time, usually two or three hours.

### STEWING (shoulder, shank, neck)

1. Cut meat into cubes about one inch in size.
2. Season with salt and pepper, sprinkle with flour.
3. Brown on all sides in hot fat.
4. Cover with boiling water.
5. Cover kettle tightly and cook very slowly until tender. Do not boil. Add vegetables just long enough before serving time that they will be tender.



## Miscellaneous Recipes

### VENISON POT ROAST WITH VEGETABLES (shoulder, rump, round)



- |                                       |                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| 3 - 4 pounds of venison               | 5 whole potatoes |
| 5 whole carrots                       | 5 whole onions   |
| Turnips and celery may also be added. |                  |

Dredge meat with flour, salt and pepper, and brown in fat. Braise the meat for two or three hours over a very low heat. When the meat is tender, add the vegetables and cook until vegetables are done. Make a gravy of the liquid in the pan and pour over the meat and vegetables.

### VENISON STEW WITH DUMPLINGS

(shank, flank, neck)

Proceed as for Pot Roast with Vegetables. Fifteen minutes before dish is ready to serve, drop in the dumplings on top of vegetables. Cover and cook without removing the cover for 15 minutes. Serve immediately.



## VENISON MEAT LOAF (neck, shank, flank, shoulder)

1 pound ground venison    ½ tablespoon chopped  
½ pound ground pork        onion  
1 egg                            1½ teaspoons salt  
½ cup dried bread crumbs    1 cup milk

Beat the egg, add milk and bread crumbs. Mix thoroughly with the meat and seasoning. Put in a greased pan and bake in medium oven (350° F.) for 1 hour. Tomato and green pepper may be added if additional seasoning is desired. The meat loaf may be made with all venison, but the addition of pork makes a more tender loaf.



## VENISON SWISS STEAK (tough steaks)



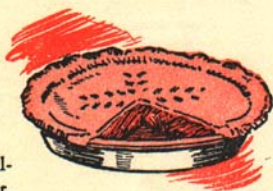
1½ pounds round steak    1 cup tomatoes  
3 large onions            2 tablespoons Worcester-  
1 medium stalk celery    shire sauce, salt and  
  pepper

Steak should be about 1½ inches thick. Dredge with flour and season with salt and pepper, then brown in fat. When brown on both sides add the other ingredients. Cover tightly and cook in medium oven (350° F.) or over low flame on top of the stove until tender, (about 1¼ hours). Remove meat to platter and make a gravy from drippings in the pan. Serve with baked potatoes.

## MINCEMEAT — (any ground venison)

2 pounds cooked venison,    ¾ pound chopped suet or  
  chopped in food            butter  
  grinder                        ½ teaspoon cloves  
4 pounds chopped apple     1 teaspoon mace  
2 pounds raisins              ½ teaspoon nutmeg  
4 cups either brown or     2 teaspoons salt  
  white sugar                 1½ teaspoons cinnamon

Add cider to cover mixture. If cider is not available, use fruit juices or water with ½ cup vinegar. Sweet fruit juices reduce the amount of sugar required. Cook very slowly until the fruits are tender (about 1 hour). This will keep indefinitely if put in fruit jars.



## VENISON SOUP (shank, flank, neck)

- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 2 - 3 pounds venison  | 2 tablespoons salt       |
| 1½ quarts cold water  | 2 medium potatoes, cubed |
| 5 to 6 carrots, cubed | 2 or 3 onions, cubed     |
| 1 bunch celery, cubed | ½ teaspoon savory        |
| 2 cups tomatoes       | 1 bay leaf               |

Soak meat in salted cold water for several hours. Simmer slowly for 2 hours skimming occasionally. Let the broth stand overnight. Next day remove the congealed fat, add vegetables and cook 1½ - 2 hours slowly.



## MEAT PIE (shoulder, flank, shank, neck)



Use equal parts of diced vegetables and cooked meat. Add seasonings and cover with left-over gravy which has been thinned with water. Bake in a covered casserole in medium oven (375° F.) for 1 hour. Just before serving time remove lid and cover with a crust of mashed potato, pastry or baking powder biscuit. If there is not enough gravy a boullion cube may be dissolved in water and thickened to make the gravy. The vegetables may be cooked on the surface burner and the liquid in which they were cooked may be used in the gravy. When vegetables and the meat are cooked add the topping at once and brown in a hot (400° F.) oven. Here is the dish for your favorite seasoning — thyme, bay leaf, savory — according to your taste.

## VENISON BARBECUE (steaks, chops)

Sear 3 pounds of venison in frying pan with slices of salt pork or other fat. Mix following ingredients in saucepan:

- |                   |   |                        |
|-------------------|---|------------------------|
| 1 cup catsup      | 3 slices lemon                                  | ½ cup beef steak sauce |
| 1 tablespoon salt | 1 onion, sliced thin                            |                        |
|                   | 2 tablespoons tarragon vinegar (may be omitted) |                        |
|                   | 1 tablespoon chili powder (for hot sauce)       |                        |

Bring mixture to a boil — stir to avoid burning. Cover venison with the sauce and roast in moderate oven (350° F.). Cook 1½ to 2 hours — turn occasionally.

## DEERBURGERS

"2 pounds ground lean venison, ¼ pound suet, a handful of moist bread, sliced onion and seasoning — well mixed and fried like hamburgers and you have venison at its best."

*Russ Bengal, Jackson, Mich.*



## Preserving

Few families can use, or will want to use a whole carcass within the time it is safe to keep the meat without some sort of preservative. The easiest and usually most satisfactory way of preservation is to use a refrigerator locker. This method is described in "Freezing Foods for Michigan Homes," Circular Bulletin 216, Michigan State University, East Lansing.



Canning venison is practical. To be sure of satisfactory results, it is suggested you follow closely the directions as given in "Home Canning of Meat," U.S.D.A. Bulletin A.W.I. — 110, copy of which can be obtained from Michigan State University, Bulletin Office, East Lansing. The directions for beef, mutton or pork apply to venison.

Venison may be salted, corned, or smoked. The "Home Meat Supply", Extension Bulletin 151, Michigan State University, East Lansing, has several pages devoted to ways of curing meat. Smoked venison is good and adds variety. This can be done commercially or at home with smoked salt. Any method described in the bulletin is applicable for venison, the only difference being that venison takes up salt rather readily and will require slightly more time for freshening.



*Consult your local Conservation Officer for regulations on the period game may be kept after season.*

*Extension Bulletin 252 "Good Eating from Woods and Fields", describes care and cooking of small game. A copy may be obtained from the Michigan State University Bulletin Office, East Lansing, or from the Michigan Department of Conservation, Lansing, or the office of your County Extension Agent.*





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