Veal for the Table

How to Select It
How to Use It

by

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This circular is third in a series of publications on meats. BEEF FOR THE TABLE (Circular 585) and PORK FOR THE TABLE (Circular 622) have already appeared, and LAMB AND MUTTON FOR THE TABLE is being prepared. Some of the basic material in Circular 585, such as muscle structure, the factors on which Government grades are based, and cookery, are not repeated in this circular. Copies of BEEF FOR THE TABLE and of PORK FOR THE TABLE will be sent free on request to residents of Illinois.
THE HOUSEWIFE who wants to keep within her budget may find that veal is one of the answers to her problem. It usually costs less than beef, pork, and lamb, and it has less fat. Therefore, it is more economical than those other meats.

True veal is the flesh of young calves ranging in age from a few days to 12 or 14 weeks. Most of them are 3 to 6 weeks old. Veal calves are usually of dairy breeding and have been fed principally on milk or milk substitutes. Only a very few veal calves come from cattle of the beef breeds.

After a calf is 12 or 14 weeks old, its flesh begins to lose the characteristics of veal and to take on those of beef. Carcasses of such animals are known as "calves." Most of these older calves come from the western ranges where their ration consists first of milk from their dams and later of grass. They are mostly of beef breeding and usually are 3 to 10 months old. Altho they are neither veal nor beef, the retailer sells their meat as veal.

The lean meat of real veal is fine-grained, soft, watery, and light pink in color. The fat, if any, is a milky white. Even on carcasses of the better grades, there is not much fat on the outer surface of the lean and practically no marbling in the lean itself. The bones are soft and, when cut, show a dark red surface.

The tips of the chine bones have large "buttons" of white cartilage or gristle (Fig. 1).

Large, white cartilage "buttons" are signs of a young animal. They appear at the tips of the chine bones (long, slanting bones extending from the spine). (Fig. 1)
The lean of calf carcasses is firmer than that of true veal, is less watery, and is coarser in texture. The grain of the lean is more pronounced; and the color is a deeper red, with a brownish tinge. The fat is firmer and often has a yellow cast. The bones are harder and larger, and the cut surfaces are not so dark a red as those of veal. The buttons are not so pronounced. In general, calf meat is not as desirable as veal of the same grade.

Grades of carcasses

Most consumer-buyers do not have the experience necessary to judge the quality of veal by looking at a carcass or a retail cut. The Government, therefore, has a system of official meat grading which gives the consumer the benefit of expert, unprejudiced judgment. Unfortunately, Government grading is not obligatory and many carcasses, especially those of poor quality, are not graded. Many retailers, however, do handle Government-graded meats. Every Government-graded carcass has been examined by a competent grader. The grade mark is stamped along the back with harmless indelible ink, so that the name of the grade appears on each major retail cut of the carcass.

Government grades of veal and calf carcasses are similar to those of beef. The fancy grades are U. S. Prime and U. S. Choice; then come U. S. Good, U. S. Commercial, U. S. Utility, and U. S. Cull. The letters “U. S.” are important, as only Government-graded meat may be so marked. Meat that does not carry these letters is not Government-graded. Because of the immaturity of the animals, sex is not considered in grading veal carcasses. Sometimes carcasses of calves approaching maturity are classified as steer, bull, or heifer.

U. S. Prime carcasses approach the ideal. Consequently there are not many of them.

U. S. Choice carcasses are ordinarily the best available. They also are few in number. They are short, blocky, compact, thick, and plump. There is a thin covering of smooth milk-white fat over the carcass. The lean ranges from light gray to a pinkish or reddish brown. It is firm, fine-grained, and velvety. The bones are small, soft, and red. Car-
A good veal carcass. The better grades of veal do not have as good conformation as similar grades of beef and are not nearly so fat. *(Fig. 2)*
casses of this grade usually are from young calves of beef breeding which have been fed whole milk only.

U. S. Good carcasses (Fig. 2) are not quite so blocky and plump as Choice. They have a very thin covering of creamy white fat. The lean ranges from a pinkish brown in veal to a pale red in calf carcasses. It is fairly firm and velvety, but slightly moist. The bones are small, soft, and red. Carcasses of this grade usually come from young calves which have had some whole milk with some grain and mill feeds.

U. S. Commercial carcasses lack the plumpness and blockiness of the better grades. They are slightly rough and rangy. The fat is extremely thin and is laid on in small patches. It is mostly white, but in the carcasses from older calves it may be tinged with yellow. The lean is usually a pinkish to reddish brown. It is slightly soft and watery and is coarse-grained. The bones are large and not as red as those from the better grades. This grade usually comes from young calves which have been fed skim milk and grain or from older range calves.

U. S. Utility carcasses are very rough, narrow, and rangy. They present a very depressed or hollowed-out appearance. There is little or no fat on the carcass. If there is any, it is somewhat yellow. The lean is pinkish brown, light tan, or dark red. It is soft, very coarse-grained, and watery. The bones are very large in proportion to the size of the carcass and lack redness. Such carcasses often come from very young calves which have been poorly fed.

U. S. Cull carcasses are extremely long, narrow, and thinly fleshed. The bones show thru the flesh. The lean is reddish brown to dark red and is very soft, coarse-grained, and watery. There is almost no fat on or in the carcass. This grade often comes from young, half-starved calves. Cuts of Utility and Cull veal are often boned, rolled, and covered with a layer of fat from the stomach to improve their appearance and salability.

Government-inspected veal. All meat that goes into interstate commerce must be Government-inspected, tho not necessarily Government-graded. Each wholesale cut being shipped from one state to another must bear a stamp certifying that the following requirements have been met: (1) the animal was free from disease, (2) the animal was slaughtered under sanitary conditions, and (3) the carcass was wholesome for food when it left the packing plant. The Government employs graduate veterinarians as inspectors.

Packer-branded veal. Many packers mark veal with various brands or trade names to indicate the grade as determined by the packer. Such veal is known as branded veal. Usually both the trade name and the name of the packer are given.
Retail cuts: Location, use, and how to cook

Retail cuts of veal, as well as wholesale cuts, are more or less standardized all over the United States. The location of the various retail cuts is shown in Fig. 3.

Location of retail veal cuts and their relation to the skeleton. (Fig. 3)
The loin chop is the most desirable of the chops from the standpoint of flavor and tenderness, but it is expensive. The “tail” or “strip end” (on the right) is not so good as the rest of the chop.

Chops and Steaks

A chop is a small slice of meat which usually makes one serving. Chops are so named because they are generally (but not always) cut with a knife and a cleaver. They are cut from small carcasses such as veal, pork, lamb, and mutton.

Steaks are larger slices of meat which are usually divided into several servings. They are cut with a knife and a saw. They are from large carcasses, such as beef, and from the thicker parts of small carcasses.

Loin chops. The best veal chops are the loin chops (Fig. 4), which correspond to the porterhouse, T-bone, and club steaks of the beef carcass. A “kidney chop” is a loin chop which contains a slice of kidney.

Loin chops are among the most expensive of the veal cuts; only round steaks or cutlets, liver, and sweetbreads cost more. Veal loin chops, however, cost about 20 percent less than the above-mentioned beefsteaks of similar grade. They also have less waste fat. Loin chops make about 3 average servings per pound.

Chops of Choice or Good grade should be cut $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch thick and fried or braised. Those of lower grade should be cut thinner and braised. Often the chops are “breaded” — this adds
The wedge-bone (top) and round-bone sirloin chops, also called steaks, have more lean in proportion to the bone than do any of the other chops. A pound of these chops serves 3 or 4 people. (Figs. 5 and 6)

to the apparent size of the serving. Loin chops often are used for parties.

Sirloin chops. Sirloin chops (Figs. 5-8), often called steaks, correspond to the wedge-bone, round-bone, double-bone, and pin-bone steaks of beef. The pin-bone chops are the least desir-

The double-bone sirloin chop costs about the same per pound as the wedge-bone and round-bone chops but contains twice as much bone. There are about 2½ servings per pound. (Fig. 7)
The pin- (or hip-)* bone sirloin chop is the wastiest of the chops, averaging only about 2 servings to a pound. (Fig. 8)

able. The better grades of sirloin chops sell for considerably less and the lower grades for only a little less than beef sirloin of the same grade. Also, sirloin chops are considerably less expensive than loin chops of the same grade. Those of Choice and Good grades should be cut about \( \frac{3}{4} \) inch thick and may be fried or braised. Those of the lower grades should be cut thin and braised.

**Rib chops.** Rib chops (*Figs. 9 and 10*) correspond to the rib steaks of beef. Those which contain a section of the gristle of the shoulder blade are the least desirable. Rib chops sell for considerably more than rib steaks (beef) of the same grade and for

A rib chop usually makes just one serving. These chops cost more than beef rib steaks of the same grade but less than veal loin chops. (Fig. 9)
For parties, rib chops are sometimes "Frenched," that is, the meat is removed from the end of the rib (as above) and after cooking, a paper frill or "chop holder" is slipped over the bare bone. (Fig. 10)

a little less than veal loin chops. A pound serves 2 to 3 people. Like pork and lamb chops, a rib chop cannot be carved to make two servings. Choice chops may be either fried or braised, but chops of other grades should always be braised.

VEAL offers a challenge to the cook. Because it comes from immature animals it lacks flavor; because it has little fat, it is often tough. These deficiencies may, however, be largely overcome by proper cooking.

Veal needs long, slow cooking. Broiling and pan broiling are not recommended. Choice or Good chops and cutlets are often fried, altho braising is better. In general, roasting is recommended for the more tender cuts, braising or pot-roasting for the less tender cuts, and stewing for the tough cuts.

The basic principles of meat cookery and different ways of cooking meat are discussed in Illinois Circular 585, "Beef for the Table."
Veal cutlets are cut from the round. They are among the most expensive of the veal cuts but serve 4 people to the pound. (Fig. 11)

Blade steaks or chops are cheap, but because of the large number of muscles they are low in quality. The connective tissues around the muscles make the meat tough. A pound serves about 3 people. (Fig. 12)

Arm chops are less wasty than blade chops, but, like the blade chops, they have a large number of muscles and are tough. (Fig. 13)
**Round steaks.** Often called cutlets, round steaks *(Fig. 11)* are cut from the round and correspond to round steaks of beef. They sell for several cents a pound more than beef round of the same grade. Except for liver and sweetbreads, they are the most expensive of the veal cuts, selling for slightly more than loin chops. This is because of the greater number of servings per pound—about 4. Round steaks should be braised. They are often stuffed for "veal birds."

**Blade and arm steaks.** These steaks *(Figs. 12-13)* are cut from the chuck. They are by far the cheapest of the steaks and chops, and serve about 3 people per pound. They should be braised.

**Roasts and Pot Roasts**

**Ribs.** Ribs of Prime, Choice, or Good grade are suitable for roasts. The lower grades should be pot-roasted. Ribs are a little less expensive than loin and serve about 2 persons per pound. They are easy to carve, especially if the chine bone is loosened or removed in the market *(see Fig. 14).*

*Standing rib roasts* are usually a better buy than rolled rib roasts because, as a rule, they have less plate meat *(Fig. 16).* The chine bone has been removed from this roast, making it easier to carve. *(Fig. 14)*
Rib rolls of the better grades make good roasts. A pound serves 4 people.  
(Fig. 15)

Too much cheap plate, which is thin, undesirable meat, is sometimes left on an expensive rib roll. This is shown on the roast below, which has not yet been rolled.  
(Fig. 16)

Ribs are often boned and sold as a rib roll (Fig. 15). Sometimes low-grade ribs are wrapped in a layer of caul fat (from the stomach) which adds slightly to their palatability but materially to their cost. Low-grade rib rolls should be pot-roasted if used, but they are not recommended.

Loin. The better grades of loin (corresponding to the porterhouse of beef) are sometimes used for roasts (Fig. 17) because of their tenderness. They are, however, difficult to carve; and,
Loin roasts rate second to rib roasts in desirability. Like the loin chops, however, even the lower grades usually contain quite a bit of waste fat and therefore are not economical. (Fig. 17)

while they are more expensive than ribs, they have only slightly more edible meat. They cut out 2 to 3 servings per pound. Utility and Cull grades should be pot-roasted.

Sirloin. Choice and Good grade sirloin (Fig. 18) is satis-

Sirloin roasts are cheaper than loin roasts and serve just as many people to a pound. Sirloin roasts are difficult to carve. (Fig. 18)
factory for roasts. The lower grades should be pot-roasted. Sirloin is considerably cheaper than loin and ribs and serves 2 to 3 per pound. Sirloin roasts and pot roasts are very difficult to carve.

Sirloin of Cull grade is often boned and sold as a "sirloin strip." This is not a satisfactory cut. If used, it should be pot-roasted. Sometimes it is covered with a layer of caul fat. While this may improve the palatability some, it is not worth the extra cost.

**Rump.** The rump (Fig. 19) is used either as a roast or a pot roast, depending upon its grade. Good or better may be roasted; Commercial or lower should be pot-roasted. It sells at about the same price as leg but contains considerably more bone; hence leg is the better buy if a large roast is needed. Rump serves about 3 people per pound.

The rump is a popular cut with many housewives because of its flavor and economy. A pound serves about 3 people. (Fig. 19)

**Leg.** Where a large cut is desired, the leg (Fig. 20) is quite satisfactory. It is sold both rump on and rump off, the former cut being preferable, since the price of the two is about the same. The leg is also cut into halves. The better grades
The leg is used for a large roast. It is high-priced but not wasty, a pound furnishing about 4 servings. (Fig. 20)

should be roasted and the lower grades pot-roasted. They provide about 4 servings per pound and are lower in price than a round roast.

**Round.** Round roasts (Fig. 21) and pot roasts are cut from

**Round roasts** come from the center part of the leg. Al tho round is the most expensive of the roasts, it serves 4 people to a pound. (Fig. 21)
the center portion of the leg. Cuts from the better carcasses should be roasted; those from the lower-grade carcasses, pot-roasted. Cull grade, which is usually sold boneless, is not recommended. Round is the highest priced of the roasts but serves 4 people per pound.

**Chuck or blade ribs and arm.** These cuts (Figs. 22-24) should be roasted or pot-roasted, according to their grade. They sell for considerably less than the other roasts and cut out 2½ to 3 servings per pound. The lower grades are often sold as boneless cuts.

The first cut of chuck or blade rib, which is the chuck cut farthest away from the neck, is not so desirable as the cuts farther forward, since it contains more bone and is more wasty. (Fig. 22)

The center chuck cut is an excellent pot roast, being less wasty than the first chuck cut. Chuck cuts include one or more ribs, a part of the backbone, and a section of the shoulder blade. (Fig. 23)
The arm roast is economical because of its reasonable price, but it is low in quality.  
(Fig. 24)

The neck usually is rolled. Don't mistake it for a rolled rib (see Fig. 15).  
(Fig. 25)

Neck. The neck (Fig. 25) is usually boned and rolled. The better grades may be pot-roasted. Neck is cheap in price and serves 4 people per pound.

Heel of round. The better grades of heel of round (Fig. 26) may be pot-roasted. It is cheap and since it is boneless 1 pound serves about 4 people.
Stew Meat

Neck and heel of round from the lower grades should be stewed.

Breast (Fig. 27) is sold both bone-in and boneless. It is best stewed, altho it sometimes is braised. It is cheap in price but when purchased bone-in, it serves only about 2 people per pound.

Veal breast is low in price but contains a high proportion of bone. A pound makes only about 2 servings. (Fig. 27)
Shanks, both fore and hind, are used for stewing. They are cheap in price, but 40 to 50 percent is bone.

Boneless shanks are also cut up and used for stew meat.

Flanks may be cut into small pieces and used for stewing.

**Ground and Diced Veal**

Veal patties (Fig. 28) are made by wrapping a strip of bacon around a patty of ground veal and skewering. The meat usually is of low grade. These patties should be braised.

Veal loaf is made of ground veal, often with about 25 percent of ground pork mixed in it. The pork improves the flavor of the loaf. Veal loaf should be thoroughly roasted. It serves 4 persons per pound.

Mock chicken legs (Fig. 29) are made by molding ground veal, usually of low grade, around a wooden skewer to approximate the shape of a chicken leg, and then rolling it in corn flakes. Mock chicken legs should be braised.

City chicken (Fig. 30) is made by impaling 5 or 6 small cubes of veal on a wooden skewer. Usually the cheaper cuts of
Mock chicken legs (left) and city chicken (right) are usually made from low-grade veal. They are not a true substitute for chicken. (Fig. 29)

the lower grades of veal are used for this purpose. Sometimes cubes of pork are alternated with the veal. City chicken should be braised.

Variety Meats

Veal liver is one of the highest priced meats, usually selling for twice as much as beef liver and four times as much as pork liver. Like all liver, it is high in iron and is very nutritious. It may be mentioned, however, that veal liver contains only three-fourths as much iron as beef liver and only one-fourth as much as pork liver. Liver is usually fried, with or without onions or bacon. It is delicious when broiled. Liver serves 4 persons per pound.
Veal sweetbreads (the thymus gland) sell for about the same price as veal liver. They are among the most perishable meats and should be cooked soon after slaughter unless they are frozen. They are considered a great delicacy by those who are familiar with them. Usually they are simmered for 15 minutes, after which the outer membrane is removed. They are then fried, creamed, or braised. One pound serves 4 or 5 people.

Brains are somewhat similar to sweetbreads in texture and in methods of cooking. They are not nearly so popular as sweetbreads and sell at a low price.

Tongue may be purchased fresh, cured, or smoked. It is simmered in water until tender and then the skin is peeled off. It is excellent for slicing cold. It is low priced and serves 4 people per pound. The water in which it is cooked makes unusually good soup stock.

Heart is usually simmered or braised and stuffed with dressing. It is cheap and economical.

Kidneys are considered a delicacy by some people but disliked by others. They are simmered (kidney stew), braised, or broiled. They are low priced.
FOUR POINTS TO REMEMBER
When Buying and Using Veal

Veal is economical. Most veal cuts, grade for grade, cost less than similar cuts of beef, pork, and lamb. Also, veal has less waste fat than other meats.

Government grades are a guide in buying veal. The grades for veal are similar to those for beef. Some of the best veal is branded by the packer.

Some of the best cuts are suitable for dinner parties. Veal loin chops, for example, are often served when there are guests for dinner.

Veal needs long, slow cooking. Roasting, pot-roasting, or stewing, depending upon the grade of the cut, will generally result in delicious, tender meat.