

## Beef

There are two things to remember when cooking beef. Firstly, always trim off any fat before cooking braising or stewing steak or before eating grilled steak. Secondly, always buy the leanest mince available and pre-fry it in a non-stick pan, discarding any fat that cooks out. Follow these rules and you will automatically reduce any beef dish's calories and fat units.

### Beef and Pasta Casserole

The condensed soup used in this simple recipe will already be seasoned so there is no need to add extra salt and pepper. If the stewing steak you buy is not very lean, get a little extra so that you end up with 450g/1lb after all the fat has been discarded. This recipe freezes well.

450g/1lb lean stewing steak  
225g/8oz carrots  
298g/10½ oz can condensed oxtail soup  
225ml/8fl oz water  
115g/4oz small pasta shapes or macaroni

Discard all visible fat from the meat and cut the lean into bite-sized cubes. Peel and slice the carrots. Place the meat and carrots in a casserole dish. Mix the soup with the water and add to the dish. Cover and cook at 150°C/300°F/gas mark 2 for 2½ hours. Stir in the pasta, making sure it is submerged in the liquid, and cook for another 30 minutes.

Serves 4/ per portion	fat cals.	grams units	grams fibre
white pasta	310	5	2.4
wholemeal pasta	300	5	4.1

### Meat Loaf with Blue Cheese

A meat loaf is a very useful basic dish to add to your maintenance menus. It can be served hot with vegetables (jacket potatoes and broccoli are particularly good) or cold with salad. The cheese makes this loaf extra tasty, but if you are not fond of blue cheese you could substitute Leicester or Double Gloucester instead. This recipe freezes well.

450g/1lb very lean ground or minced beef  
115g/4oz mushrooms  
50g/2oz onion  
1 egg, size 3  
50g/2oz fresh wholemeal breadcrumbs  
45ml/3 level tablespoons tomato ketchup  
5ml/1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
Salt and pepper  
75g/3oz Danish Blue cheese

Line a 450g/1lb loaf tin with foil. Finely chop the mushrooms and onion. If you have a food processor use it to chop them, if not do it by hand. Lightly beat the egg. Mix all

the ingredients except the cheese together and season well with salt and pepper. Place half the mixture in the loaf tin and level the top. Grate the cheese and place on top of the meat. Cover with the remaining meat mixture. Cover with foil and bake at 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 for 1 hour. Turn out and serve hot or cold.

Serves 4/325 calories  
5 fat units/2.1 grams fibre per portion

### Bobotie

This South African national dish consists of a curried meat and fruit mixture topped with a savoury custard.

40g/1½ oz bread  
250ml/9fl oz skimmed milk  
450g/1lb very lean ground or minced beef  
1 medium onion  
1 medium cooking apple  
20ml/4 level teaspoons curry powder  
10ml/2 level teaspoons apricot jam  
30ml/2 level tablespoons sultanas or raisins  
15ml/1 tablespoon lemon juice  
Salt and pepper  
2 bay leaves  
2 eggs, size 3

Place the bread in a bowl with 115ml/4fl oz milk and leave to soak. Brown the mince in a non-stick pan and drain off and discard the fat. Finely chop the onion. Peel, core and chop the apple. Add the onion, apple, curry powder, jam, sultanas and lemon juice to the meat. Stir in the bread and milk and season with salt and pepper. Mix well and turn into an ovenproof dish. Lay the bay leaves on top. Cover and cook at 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 for 1 hour. Discard the bay leaves. Beat the eggs with the remaining milk and season with salt and pepper. Pour over the meat and return to the oven uncovered. Cook for another 30 minutes.

Serves 4/305 calories  
3 fat units/1.8 grams fibre per portion

### Beef and Spinach Bake

Spinach is a good source of fibre and makes this beef bake extra filling. Serve it hot with extra vegetables — potatoes mashed with a little skimmed milk would be good. This recipe freezes well.

350g/12oz frozen chopped spinach  
350g/12oz very lean mince or ground beef  
15ml/1 level tablespoon flour  
115g/4oz mushrooms  
5ml/1 level teaspoon mixed dried herbs  
15ml/1 level tablespoon tomato purée  
115g/4oz cottage cheese with chives and onion  
150g/5oz carton low-fat natural yoghurt

Salt and pepper  
115g/4oz Lancashire cheese

Cook the spinach as directed. Place in a sieve and press back of a spoon to squeeze out water. Brown the mince in a pan, then drain off and discard the fat. Add the flour into the mince. Slice the spinach small or chop roughly if large. Mix the meat with the spinach, herbs, salt and pepper and turn into a dish. Level the top. Cover and cook at 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 for 15 minutes. Crumble the cheese on top. Cook uncovered for 10 minutes. Brown the top under the grill.

Serves 4/315 calories  
5 fat units/6 grams fibre per portion

### Cheesy Mince Cobbler

You can use ready-grated Parmesan if you wish, or buy a whole block and grate it yourself. The cheesy topping is a delicious topping to this beef mince, makes a substantial and economical meal.

450g/1lb lean minced or ground beef  
15ml/1 level tablespoon flour  
1 medium onion  
225g/8oz can tomatoes  
1 beef stock cube  
150ml/¼ pint boiling water  
Salt and pepper  
115g/4oz self-raising flour  
2.5ml/½ level teaspoon baking powder  
2.5ml/½ level teaspoon dry mustard  
25g/1oz butter or margarine  
25g/1oz Parmesan cheese  
25g/1oz mature Cheddar cheese  
2.5ml/½ level teaspoon mixed dried herbs  
60ml-90ml/4-6 tablespoons skimmed milk

Brown the minced beef in a non-stick pan, then drain off all the fat. Add the flour and turn into a casserole dish. Chop the onion and rough chop the tomatoes. Add to the meat. Dissolve the stock cube in the water and then pour into the pan. Season and stir to mix. Cover and cook at 190°C/375°F/gas mark 5 for 15 minutes. Sieve together the flour, baking powder, dry mustard and a little milk. Rub in the butter or margarine. Mix the cheeses and stir in with the milk. Add enough milk to make a soft dough. Knead very lightly for a few minutes until smooth, then place on a surface and pat into a square 50cm/20in long. Cut into 8 squares and place in the casserole. Bake, uncovered, for another 10 minutes.

Serves 4/405 calories  
5.5 fat units/1.8 grams fibre per portion