

AJO COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE



Fall 2009 / Week 6 of 13

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Planned harvest: Bartlett Pears, Bell Peppers, Butternut Squash, Green Chiles, Cucumbers, French Breakfast Radishes, Red La Soda Potatoes, Tomatoes.



Grass-fed Beef Tips: The beef in our beef shares comes from Double Check Ranch in Winkelman, AZ, run by the Schwennesen family. Their cattle are raised humanely and treated respectfully throughout their lives, living on open range and eating only range and pasture grass. No hormones, antibiotics, or animal byproducts are included in their diets. Also, it is dry aged for 14 days in the ranch's aging room, tenderizing naturally and gaining its full-bodied flavor. The animals do not have the heavily marbled fat that develops on grain-fed animals, but Double Check Ranch beef is distinctively lean and full-flavored. It

is therefore important to adjust your cooking methods, and be especially careful not to overcook. As a rule, grass-fed beef should be exposed to as little heat as possible. You might want to dust off your meat thermometer, or get one if you don't have one already. This will help to best cook your roasts. Then you might try practice cooking with the more forgiving pieces of meat such as the ground beef and strips before cooking your first steak. This meat does not have heavy marbling, thus it will cook faster (about a third less time) than store-bought meat. Paul Schwennesen likes to sear the thinner steaks on high heat and then turn down the heat. The juices will come up when done, giving a delicious medium-rare steak; but he cautions against doing this with steaks over ¾" thick, which need lower temperatures to cook through. Sarah Schwennesen likes to use the round roasts to make shredded beef, by cooking it in a crock pot or slow cooker for a whole day. Put it in in the morning and forget about it until evening, and then after a few minutes of pulling the meat apart, you've got a main course ready for dinner. Grilling steaks can be done, but steaks generally have a tendency to get forgotten on an outside grill. Therefore 'grilling' your steak in a pan on the stove top is recommended – ideally a seasoned cast iron skillet, but any pan will do, if you use olive oil. And because this meat does not have excessive fat, liberal use of olive oil it will help to ensure that your meat does not dry out while cooking.



How to prepare grass-fed Filet, New York Strip, Sirloin

If you're a purist, the best way to cook these tender cuts is in a skillet. Get a heavy duty pan (cast iron works best) as piping hot as you can. Sear each side of the well-thawed steak for about 30-45 seconds on each side, until it gets a good toasting to keep juices inside. While doing this, you can salt the uncooked sides liberally. Once seared (between 1 and 3 minutes), turn the pan way down, or even off entirely. Slowly let the steaks cook until you begin to see the juices rise to the top of the steak. Flip and repeat. If you want to grill, try to do the same thing; the goal being to keep the moisture IN the steak. Keep the lid up/off, it is critical for preventing over-cooking. Sometimes people forget about their meat on the grill with the lid down/on. But the lid instruction is critical because with it down, the meat will *bake* as opposed to *grill* with searing heat on one side at a time. Having the lid on the grill makes it bake the meat (heat all around) rather than sear it on the side with the flame - that's why we say you **MUST** leave the lid off. **VERY IMPORTANT** not to leave the steak alone – if you do, you risk forgetting about it and leaving it for too long, remember that grass-fed beef cooks faster than corn-fed beef.

So, get the grill hot, sear it on each side; then turn down the heat and start with the first side, cooking it until the juices rise up to the top of the meat, and flip, do the same on the other side – adding salt/pepper as you like. Then remove and it should be perfect!

RECIPES ETC.

Chuck Roast a la Sarah Schwennesen

Sarah has modified Mike Giles' superb chuck roast recipe. The fat of the chuck roast will give it great flavor, so don't touch it!

In a heavy cooking pot on the stove, put about 1/8" of olive oil into the pot and heat (medium-high, but don't burn the oil!) to brown the chuck roast in. You'll use the same pot to cook it in after browning the roast, so don't get a shallow pan versus a pot. In a wide bowl mix together flour and some kosher salt to be used as a light coating on the roast before you brown it in the oil. Lightly flour the roast and then put in the oil to brown it on both sides, and preferably on the edges too if you can manage it. This seals in the taste, says Mike.

Then turn the heat down and simmer, add 2 cups of water and 3 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce, and 1 Tbsp kosher salt. You can add soy sauce if you like. I also like to add freshly ground pepper, marjoram and rosemary to flavor the roast nicely. Place the lid on the pot and leave alone on simmer for 2 hours.

After the roast is done cooking, use the remaining juices to make a lovely gravy with cornstarch (or flour) and water to thicken it. It usually takes 2 Tbsp cornstarch and mix in enough water to get it just beyond the thick paste state. Boil the remaining juices and add the cornstarch/water mixture while constantly stirring to get a smooth gravy, reduce heat and stir for a few more minutes so it gets to the desired thickened consistency.

Mike says that if you want carrots and potatoes with your roast (they add a nice flavor too to the gravy), add them after an hour and cook for an extra half hour.

You can also easily transfer this recipe to the crock pot (though you'll have to brown the roast in a pan and make the gravy out of the juices in the crock pot).

Sarah's Special BBQ Ribs

We find that the short ribs are best when cooked long and slow – so we typically start them cooking first thing in the morning after marinating overnight in the BBQ sauce. You can make your own sauce, or you can just put a bottle of store-bought over the ribs.

Put the short ribs in the crock pot (slow cooker) when they are frozen and then cover with the following ingredients:

- 1 can of tomato sauce (or substitute fresh tomatoes)
- 1 onion, coarsely chopped
- 5-10 cloves garlic (depending on how much you like it), coarsely chopped
- 1/3 cup Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- splash of red wine to taste
- freshly ground black pepper and kosher salt

1/8 cup chili powder or red pepper powder (if you like sweet BBQ versus tangy, then substitute for this some molasses and/or brown sugar)

Then leave the ribs in the fridge overnight to thaw and marinate, and in the morning turn on the crock pot on low and cook through the day until the evening, for about 12 hours. The meat falls off of the bones – they provide the great flavor. If you want the meat on the bones then cook less (like 6 hours).

Sarah's Shredded Beef

Put a roast in the crock pot with enough liquid to cover the roast – either broth (make with the soup bones -- the 'powdered broth' from the store is just MSG and salt), wine, or water. Then add in pickled habanero garlic, chili powder, kosher salt on top of the roast, and top with a bit of olive oil. Cook it for at least 4 hours. Then use two forks to pull the meat apart and shred it. Use in burritos!

And this alternative (Paul's favorite) comes from the Foley Clan: Put a round roast in a crock pot (frozen even, it doesn't matter) and put just a bit of water in the bottom (1/4 cup, or enough to cover the bottom of the pan). Cook all day long while you're working, and it will have just fallen apart. Extra seasonings are completely unnecessary, even salt!

Rib Steak

For such a fabulous steak as the rib steak, Sarah recommends putting a little olive oil in a pan, heating it till pretty hot, searing one side of the rib steak and salt/peppering it while it is searing. Then flip it, turn down the heat, put in red wine until it comes to about half up on the steak. Salt and pepper the steak and wait until the wine cooks off. Delish!

If there is a lot of wine in the pan be careful not to overcook the meat – the best test for when the meat is done (rare is the Schwennesen's preferred choice) is to watch for when the red juices come up to the top of the steak. Take it off the grill/pan once you see that.

Sarah's Pot Roast

Just put your pot roast – any chuck roast or shoulder roast – in the crock pot with turnips, carrots, potatoes, garlic and onion on top. Then put water in about 1/4 inch up the side of the crock pot. You can also add whole tomatoes and less water. Then season to taste (salt, pepper, chili, etc.) and wait for about 4 or 5 hours. The longer you wait, the more it will fall apart.

For more tips and recipes go to

www.doublecheckranch.com