



## IFAS EXTENSION

# Tips on Meat Carving <sup>1</sup>

R.L. Reddish<sup>2</sup>

### Beef

**Standing rib roast.** Remove the short ribs from this roast and separate the backbone from the ribs by sawing through the ribs at the backbone. The backbone can be easily removed when the roast is cooked. ( Figure 1 )

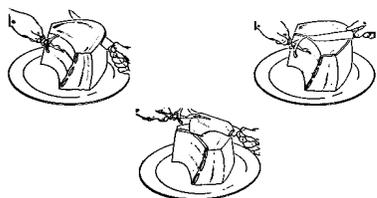


Figure 1.

**The cooked roast.** Beef roasts carve easier when cooked rare or medium. A meat thermometer will help take the guesswork out of cooking. Place the meat thermometer in the center of the thickest part of the roast (not touching bone or fat). When the meat thermometer registers the desired internal temperature remove the roast from the oven; 140° F. for rare roast beef; 160° F. for medium; and 170° F. for well done. An oven temperature of 300° to 325° F. will reduce cooking losses and provide a tasty roast. High oven temperatures and over-cooked

roasts reduce flavor of the meat and increase cooking losses.

Roasts will carve easier if they undergo a rest period of 10 to 15 minutes after they are removed from the oven.

Place the cooked roast on the platter with the small cut surface up and the rib side to your left. With the guard up, insert the fork firmly between the top two ribs. From the far outside edge slice across the grain toward the ribs. Make the slices 1/8" to 3/8" thick. Release each slice by cutting close along the rib with the knife tip.

After each cut, lift the slice on the blade of the knife to the side of the platter. Hot platters should be used unless the slices are to be served immediately.

**Blade pot roast or 7-bone roast.** This is probably the most difficult of all beef roasts to carve. The blade pot roast usually contains part of one rib, a portion of the blade bone and sometimes a section of the backbone. All of these bones make carving difficult. ( Figure 2 )

Muscle fibers run in different directions which prevents simple cross-grain carving.

1. This document is AS6, one of a series of the Animal Science Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date March 1980. Reviewed June 2003. Visit the EDIS Web Site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.  
2. R.L. Reddish, Extension Meats Specialist, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

**Figure 2.**

The long cooking process softens the tissues attached to the bones, therefore the bones can be slipped out easily before the roast is placed on the table.

Pot roasts cooked rare or medium can be carved without difficulty. Well done pot roasts are most difficult to carve.

Separate the muscles and carve each muscle separately because all fibers do not run in the same direction. Each muscle can be separated and carved across the grain. Two or three slices 1/4 to 3/8 of an inch thick depending on size are served to each person.

**Porterhouse steak.** Hold the steak with the fork inserted at the left and cut close around the bone. Lift the bone to the side of the platter where it will not interfere with the carving. ( Figure 3 )

**Figure 3.**

Hold the tenderloin firmly with the fork and cut across full width of the steak, making wedge-shaped slices. (Wider at far side.) Each serving will include a portion of tenderloin and top loin.

Serve flank end last if additional servings are needed. A board, to fit the platter, protects cutting edge of the knife.

A suggested procedure for carving the porterhouse steak is serving each muscle separately. The bone is removed as shown in the diagram. The sirloin muscle (the large muscle) can be cut into slices or wedges. Slices can also be made from the smaller tenderloin muscle or filet.

## Fresh Pork

**Sirloin or loin end pork roast.** Loosen the tenderloin muscle and cut through the joint that connects the hipbone to the back bone. When the

roast cooks, the backbone falls away from the meat and can easily be removed. ( Figure 4 )

**Figure 4.**

Use a meat thermometer and cook the pork roast at 325° to 350° F. until the internal temperature is 170° F. Let the roast rest 10 to 15 minutes before carving.

**The cooked roast.** Remove the bones and separate the small tenderloin muscle from the large sirloin muscle. Make cross-grain slices 1/8" to 3/8" thick.

## Ham

**Baked whole ham.** Place the ham on the platter or carving tray with the fat or decorated side up. The shank end should always be placed to the carver's right. The thin side of the ham from which the first slices are made will be nearest or farthest from the carver depending on whether the ham is from the left or right side of pork. ( Figure 5 )

**Figure 5.**

Insert the fork and cut several slices parallel to the length of the ham on the thin side. Turn the ham so that it rests on the surface just cut. Hold the ham firmly with the fork and cut a small wedge from the shank end. By removing the wedge the succeeding slices are easier to cut and release from the bone.

Keep the fork in place to steady the ham and cut thin slices down to the leg bone. Release slices by cutting along the bone at right angles to the slices. For more servings turn the ham back to its original position and slice at right angles to the bone.

## Lamb

**Leg Roast.** Lamb legs should be roasted at an oven temperature of 300° to 325° F. The interior temperature when removed from the oven should be

175° to 180° F. Always serve lamb hot hot or cold cold, but never luke-warm. ( Figure 6 )



**Figure 6.**

Bone and muscle structure of the "leg of lamb" is similar to the baked ham or fresh pork ham. Follow directions previously given for carving a baked whole ham as a guide for carving the roast leg of lamb.

**These four simple rules or guides will help make carving a pleasure:**

- Have the meat cuts properly cut and prepared before cooking.
- Observe the bone and muscle structure of each cut.
- Use a sharp knife.
- Cut across the grain of fibers.