

# Minnesota Raised Elk

MAY 2016

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Want to try your hand at grilling elk this Memorial Day? Brenda Hartkopf of Splendor Ridge Elk Farm in Howard Lake, Minnesota filled us in on her favorite aspects of raising elk, the best tips for cooking and grilling elk, and shared some of her favorite recipes to make your Memorial Day elk a success.

## *Splendor Ridge Elk Farm*



*Howard Lake, MN*

“There are many great aspects about raising elk, but perhaps the greatest is watching the bulls grow their antlers in the spring and summer. Elk bulls grow a new set of antlers every year, gaining 3-4 pounds of growth every year until about 8-10 years of age, then generally maintaining that yearly size thereafter. They can literally grow 40 pounds of antler on their head in just 120 days. And they do this over and over every year! It is amazing to watch this process and to think about how an animal can physically do this year after year. It’s incredible to see what the bulls look like with their full display of antler and how regal and truly majestic they are. And we are fortunate enough to behold them in all their splendor every day on the farm.” -Brenda Hartkopf, Owner

### *Splendor Ridge Elk Farm’s Cooking Guide by Brenda Hartkopf*

Elk can be substituted for red meat in any conventional recipe and is easily prepared by grilling, roasting, broiling, stir-frying, or pan-frying. Because of elk’s very low fat content, care must be taken during the cooking process so that it does not become dry. Cooking with lower temperatures, less time, and added moisture will help to insure that elk meat does not dry out. For the best results, cook elk to no further than medium doneness. To try your hand at cooking elk, here are a few tips for a successful meal:

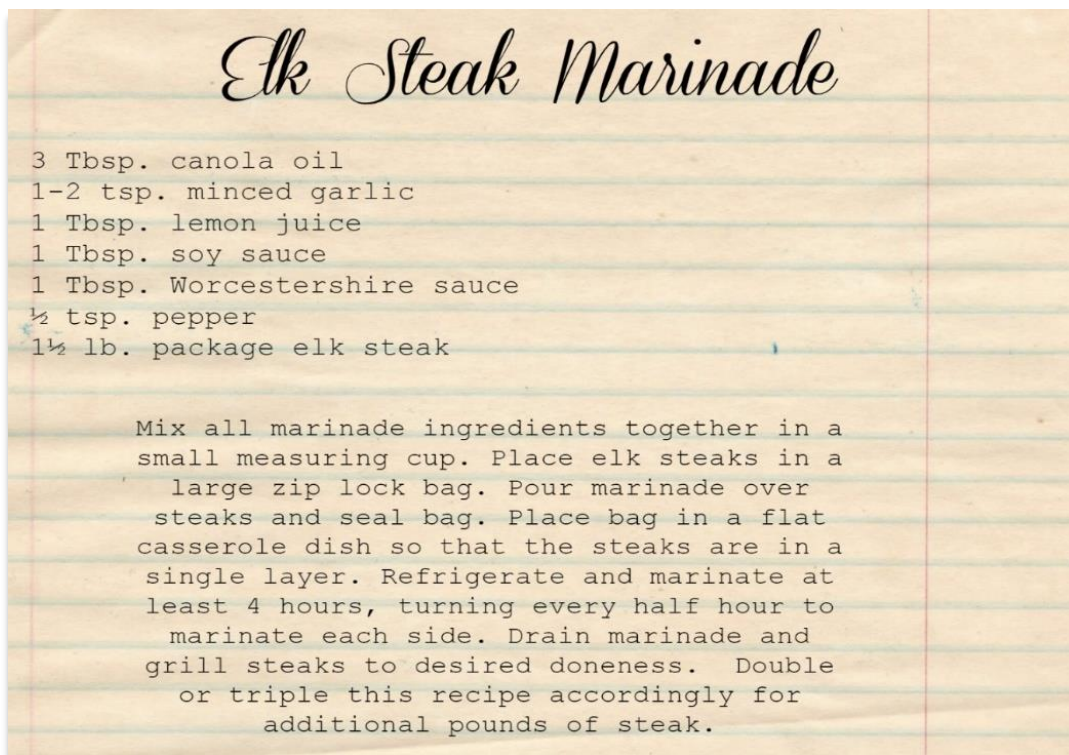
**ROASTS:** Roasts cook very well in a crock-pot or roaster. Add 1-2 cups of water along with desired seasonings. Or instead of water, try your favorite creamed soup plus a ½ can of milk. Feel free to use whatever form of moisture you desire. Elk is a very versatile meat. Oven roast elk at 275 to 300 degrees until your meat thermometer reads 140 to 160 degrees for a medium-done roast. If using a crock-pot, add desired liquid and spices and cook for 4-6 hours on high or for a “melt-in-your-mouth” roast, cook on low heat for 10 to 12 hours.

**BURGER:** The most versatile of all elk cuts, elk burger can be substituted for ground red meat in almost any kind of dish and adds tremendous flavor and texture. Elk burger is great by itself, but if more moisture is desired, add 1 tsp. olive oil or 1 egg per pound of ground elk. Fry or grill burger patties for 5 minutes per side over medium heat.

**STEAKS:** Steaks work well in a cast iron fry pan or over the grill when cooked to medium-rare. Fry steaks in olive oil with your favorite seasonings. If grilling, marinating steaks in your favorite oil marinade creates the ultimate steak experience. Fry or grill elk steaks over medium heat for 6 to 7 minutes per side.

## *Recipes*

As you can tell, the Hartkopfs know a thing or two about preparing elk. Thankfully, they were willing to share a few of their favorite recipes for us to try and enjoy. With their helpful cooking guide and delicious recipes, we can all become elk meat experts this summer.



## Swedish Elk Meat Balls

1½ lbs. elk burger  
1½ tsp. salt  
1/8 tsp. pepper  
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce  
1 egg  
½ cup onion, minced  
¾ cup dry bread crumbs  
1 Tbsp. parsley, minced  
1 can Cream of Mushroom soup

Mix all ingredients except can of soup thoroughly. Shape mixture into balls the size of a walnut. Brown in ¼ cup oil. Remove meatballs from frying pan. Pour soup plus 1 soup can of water into pan drippings and mix until smooth. Return meat balls to pan. Simmer for 15-20 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

## Elk Meatloaf

2 eggs  
1 can (8 oz.) tomato sauce  
1 medium onion, finely chopped  
1 cup dry bread crumbs  
1 teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon pepper  
1 1/2 pounds ground elk  
3 Tablespoons brown sugar  
3 Tablespoons Dijon mustard  
3 Tablespoons apple cider vinegar

In a large bowl, lightly beat eggs then add the tomato sauce, onion, crumbs, salt, and pepper. Add elk and mix well. Press into an ungreased 9" x 5" x 3" loaf pan. Combine the brown sugar, mustard, and vinegar then pour over the top of the meatloaf. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 70 minutes.

Find elk producers near you in the [Minnesota Grown Directory](#) and [Minnesota Elk Breeders Association website](#).