



# THE Country Kitchen Journal

**"Iowa Meats and Siesel's Meat & Deli - Serving San Diego since 1968!"**

An Iowa Meat Farms/Siesel's Meat & Deli Publication

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## The Cold Hard Facts

This subject is long overdue. With our hectic lifestyles, and the dominance of the two-income family, everyone is going to be forced to freeze some of our lovingly selected aged beef at some time or other. Freezing is going to reduce the quality of the meat. Yet, in spite of that, there are times that we will actually recommend it. We'll get into that later.

Freezing meats is like anything else. If you take the time to understand exactly what is happening, it can give you some clues to the right paths to follow. When a piece is frozen, the liquid inside each cell expands and damages the wall of the cell. It's easy to see why it will lose so much liquid when it thaws.

What they have found, though, is that when it is frozen very quickly, the ice crystals that are formed are smaller. The smaller the crystals, the less damage. So, that is the first rule of freezing any meat. **"FREEZE QUICKLY!"**

Following the same idea of all those molecules slowing down and expanding in the freezing process, the opposite happens when it thaws. The molecules begin to speed up and run around like crazy. That leads us to second rule: **"THAW SLOWLY!"** By thawing gradually, in the refrigerator, the meat will actually have a chance to hold on to more of it's liquid.

Probably the most asked question is: "How long can I keep meat frozen?" Let's go back to that concept of "slowing down the molecules". That is exactly what freezing does. It doesn't stop the process. It just slows it down. Now, the longer that something is frozen, the more damage is done. So, rule number three is: **"USE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE!"** When you freeze something for a very short period of time, say less than two weeks, and then thaw slowly, you will lose very little quality.

That doesn't really answer the question. To do that, we have to look at another problem, 'freezer burn'. This is actually "de-hydration" while the meat is frozen, and it occurs when the meat is exposed to the air. It will appear as "white" areas on the meat and will feel dry and flaky to touch. The way that you avoid this is by packaging properly. (meats that has 'spots' of freezer burn are still usable. Just trim away the discoloration.)

We use "freezer" paper to wrap all of our meats. This is just paper with a plastic coating. It is not the plastic that protects the meat from de-hydrating, but the liquid that it traps. It does a good job, but if you plan to keep something a long time, or don't know how long, it is a good idea to add another layer of protection. Remember that the point is to keep the air away, so placing inside of a plastic bag will do the trick. So, that's rule number four: **"WRAP PROPERLY!"**

Quickly then, let's re-cap the rules of freezing:

1. Freeze Quickly
2. Thaw Slowly
3. Use as quickly as possible
4. Wrap properly

Above, we said that there are times that we actually will recommend buying meat for your freezer and that is now. There are two times a year when the market prices are down, March and October. This is the optimal time to buy in bulk and SAVE! This month we are having our Bonanza Meat Sale! It's a 3-day event and will be held **ONLY at Siesel's Meat & Deli, Friday March 22nd, Saturday March 23rd, and Sunday March 24th.** FREE CUT & WRAP too!

**Bonanza  
Meat Sale  
3/22 to 3/24  
ONLY at  
Siesel's**



Iowa Meat Farms • 6041 Mission Gorge Road, San Diego CA • 619-281-5766  
Siesel's Meat & Deli • 4131 Ashton Street, San Diego CA • 619-275-1234

## "Time Is On Our Side!"



Alas, we live in the "modern" world, where quantity has replaced quality, where speed is placed on a pedestal, and where no one seems to care. Isn't it sad? There is a giant food industry out there, but they just don't care about something as personal, important, and sacred as YOUR St. Patrick's Day dinner!

Well, that's them, not us. When it comes to food, we take EVERYTHING seriously, especially when it comes to YOUR corned beef. That's why we dug into our memory banks and started making our own barrel-cured corned beef the way every meat shop used to do. It wasn't nostalgia that motivated us. It was the simple fact that there was not a single piece of commercial corned beef out there that was good enough for YOUR (and our) table. We perfected our formula over the years, and we can truly say that, in our opinion, it is the best tasting corned beef in the whole world!

All corned beef is produced by "curing" the meat with a solution of salt, sugar, and sodium nitrite. But there is an ingredient that is missing from all the commercial stuff. That ingredient is "TIME"!!!

The "junk" that all those unfortunates buy is pumped with that solution. It's ready almost instantly. Our product is layered into barrels where it sits for 6-8 weeks. During that slow cure, it is also has the time to absorb all of the complex flavors of the traditional pickling spices. There is allspice, coriander, mustard seed, bay leaf, garlic, dark brown sugar, dried chiles, clove.....all of them combine to produce a spectacular flavor experience.

There is another side to this "time" thing. While you are putting away the holiday decorations and getting ready to enjoy the Superbowl, we are busy putting down the corned beef. We do it so that, when St. Pat's rolls around, that product is at its absolute PEAK of flavor. One of the best things about our formula is that we have been able to achieve all of this while keeping the saltiness down to a minimum.

Now, if you need an extra push, St. Patrick's Day falls on Sunday this year. Why not invite your friends and family and give them a chance to experience perfection.

If you, yourself, have never been privileged to enjoy this phenomenon and have NEVER cooked corned beef, take heart. We have detailed instructions available at both stores. They will tell you exactly what to buy and how to prepare it. BE WARNED! Every year we make more of this fabulous product, and every year we sell out. (Last year we made over 5000lbs) **ORDER EARLY AND ENJOY!**

## Sip and Savor!

Wine picks from Carlos & Dom

Ham and lamb are the more traditional meats served for Easter dinner, yet both pose the most questions about which wines pair best. As a leaner cut of meat, ham goes well with light to medium bodied white or red wines. Based on its preparation, ham with its sweet and/or salty richness pairs best with wines that have a touch of sweetness, plenty of acidity, and bold fruit. For a white wine consider a Sauvignon Blanc, and for a red consider a Pinot Noir. Both will also work well with lamb which can be a bit gamier. We have two of each varietal that we highly recommend.

Exclusive to Iowa Meat Farms, the **High Camp Reserve Pinot Noir (\$38.99)** from Paso Robles has become a customer favorite, and one of Dom's too. Sourced with grapes from the Central Coast, this Pinot has a nice ruby color and a very elegant nose with red and black cherry notes of plum, fresh strawberry and cola. The pallet is met with lots of red fruit and sweet vanilla and has a finish that lingers with soft tannins.

Carlos at Siesels is really excited about the **Elk Cove Willamette Valley Estate Pinot Noir (\$30.99)**. This wine just earned 92 points from Wine Spectator. It is plump and generous with raspberry and cranberry flavors that are accented with clove and other dusky spices and finishes with refined tannins.

The **San Simeon Sauvignon Blanc (\$19.99)** is the perfect white wine to go with your ham or lamb dinner and is available at both of our stores. It is a bright refreshing wine with intense flavors of citrus and pear. The nose reveals bright aromas of white peach and lime zest. This well-balanced wine has a nice lengthy finish.

The **Black Stallion North Coast Sauvignon Blanc (\$18.99)** is another of Carlos's favorites. This wine opens with vibrant, tropical aromas of guava, papaya, lemongrass, and honeysuckle complemented by flavors of lime, lemon, and tropical fruit. It offers bright acidity, light to medium body and has a remarkable finish.

While these are our suggestions, some other white wines to consider include Riesling and Pinot Grigio, and some other reds include Zinfandel and Syrah. As always, the wine departments at both **Siesels and Iowa Meat Farms** offer a variety of wines for everyone's taste and budget. **Cheers!**

## Pork....It's Whats for Dinner!

Do you find yourself struggling to answer "What's for dinner?" Funny how those three words can put you into a tailspin. But wait, stress no more, IMF/Siesel's is here to save the day! We make the most amazing Stuffed Pork chops with your choice of Cajun Cornbread Stuffing, Apple Cinnamon Stuffing or our Traditional Sage Stuffing. Season them up, pop them in the oven at 350° for 45 minutes. In the meantime steam some fresh veggies and pour yourself a glass of wine. Guaranteed you will be the hit at the dinner table tonight. They will think you spent all day in the kitchen making this amazing meal! Oh and we just so happen to have them on Special this month for \$6.99lb! Cheers and ENJOY!



## Forget the Bonnet!

Sure, the hat's nice, and you can go ahead and march in that parade. We have to tell you, though, we think your family and guests are a bit more interested in what goes into the center of your Easter table, than what goes on your head!

"Spring Holidays" seem to be a bigger "food" day than most. It's the whole "renewal" thing, and, more importantly, it's a traditional celebration of Spring harvest. That's especially true of a lot of Eastern European cultures. Some of us have that heritage. Preparations would begin weeks ahead of time. There was baking and making sausages and grating fresh horseradish.....and a lot of other stuff that we don't seem to have time for these days.

If you haven't already chosen your meal, here's a list of some of the Spring Holiday traditions:

**LAMB:** This one goes all the way back to the "sacrificial lamb" in Biblical days. There is no doubt that it is, by far, the biggest day of the year for lamb. If you are not a "lamb person", you may want to change your mind.

Modern lamb is young, tender, and much milder in flavor than in times past. As far as cooking goes, a leg of lamb is pretty much foolproof. We offer the highest grades of American lamb in both boneless and bone-in styles. Since you cook by diameter, not weight, the cooking time is identical for both.

The magic numbers are 2 hours at 350°. That's a target time, and your own oven may vary a bit. As with all roasting, you want to depend on a good testing thermometer to take the guesswork out of it. Cook to an internal temperature of 125° for rare, 130° for medium rare, and 135° for medium. Allow the roast to rest for 10-15 minutes before you carve. (Boneless is the easiest!) Since it is a bit stronger in flavor than most meats, lamb lends itself to the stronger herbs and spices. Lemon, rosemary, and garlic are pretty traditional. We carry lots of different lamb rubs. One of the more popular ones is Sauce Goddess Moroccan Twist. It has an exotic spice blend that works well.

**HAM:** This is another Easter favorite. We have offered the same brand of bone-in hams since we opened our doors. There is a reason for that. They are still the best ham on the market. They are NOT a water added ham, so you don't have to worry about them being too salty. They can weigh up to 20 pounds, but smaller portions are available. If you want to kick it up a notch try:

**SIESEL'S DOUBLE SMOKED BONE-IN HAM:** We take that same super ham of ours and give it a slow-smoke in our smoke house at Siesel's. If you like that heavy, heavy smoke flavor, this is the one for you.

**SLICED, TIED, AND BAKED BONELESS HAM:** If you don't want to be bothered with the whole "carving" thing, we take a super-premium boneless ham, slice it, tie it back together, bake it, and glaze it with our own Glenn's apricot-pineapple glaze. Decorated with pineapple rings and cherries, it makes a tasty center piece. You can serve them cold or heat them in a 300° oven for about an hour and a half. They weigh up to about 8 pounds, and are available whole or half. Order early!

**PORK LOIN:** If you had ham at Christmas and are not into lamb, may we suggest roast pork loin? We can custom cut it to fit the size of your Easter gathering. Figure one bone per person. If you are having the whole family over then we'd go with a Crown Roast of Pork.

**STANDING RIB ROAST:** There are some of us that can't resist a good old fashioned Roast Beef no matter what the occasion. Standing Rib Roast, Whole Top Sirloins, or Beef Tenderloin is always available and hand cut to order.

Don't forget that **Easter Sunday is on March 31st this year!** Make sure to place your orders a week ahead for best selection. ENJOY!



# March Specials

Good through March 31st, 2024 or while supplies last

We also carry  
Duck, Lamb,  
Pork, Veal, Geese,  
Pheasant, Quail,  
& more game!

Our Own, Barrel Cured

## Corned Beef

Round Cut \$9.99 lb.

Point Cut \$9.99 lb.

Flat Cut \$12.99 lb.

Fresh "American"

Lamb Leg

Lamb Rack

Lamb Crown

Lamb Chop

Lamb Shanks

USDA **PRIME**, Bone-In,  
Aged Midwestern

## Rib Roast

\$34.99 lb.

USDA **CHOICE**, Aged  
Midwestern

## Flat Cut Brisket

\$12.99 lb.

## Kruse Bone-In Smoked Ham

Whole or Half

\$3.99 lb.

## Our Own Stuffed Pork Chops

All varieties

\$6.99 lb.

Dietz & Watson  
Barrel Cured  
Sauerkraut

\$3.49 lb.

## Siesel's Double Smoked Ham

Whole or Half

\$4.99 lb.

## Fresh Lean Ground Beef

3lb Bag

\$3.99 lb.

Our Own, House Made

## Polish Sausage

\$5.99 lb.

Mary's Free Range

## Whole Chickens

\$4.99 lb.

## Large 16/20 Cooked Shrimp

\$17.99 lb.