

# Greater New Orleans Living

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# Where's the Beef?

Make it extra-lean and red meat can be a part of a healthy diet

By Molly Kimball

During the first session with new clients of nutrition counseling, I always ask what they usually eat throughout the day. Some have already made a few nutritional changes on their own, and inevitably they report typical meals including "chicken. And, well, lots of chicken. Grilled, baked, broiled, really any way you can make chicken."



## Ask Molly

You've got questions? Our nutritionist, **Molly Kimball, L.D.N., R.D., C.S.S.D** has the answers.

I hear this all the time, particularly when people are trying to eat more nutritiously. The assumption is that if you want to be "healthy," you can only have chicken, turkey and fish.

Fortunately for meat-loving readers, the no-beef theory is a myth and an over-simplification of health and nutrition principles. The reality is that lean beef and pork can easily fit into any balanced diet. You just have to know which cuts are leanest. Sadly, this is where the communication gap often occurs. Many health professionals and media outlets just find it easier to recommend avoiding beef and pork altogether rather than explain which cuts are lean and which should be avoided.

Take ground turkey, for example. Countless turkey burgers have been served by the most well-intentioned meal planners. It makes sense considering that ground turkey is a popular substitute for ground beef. Ironically, though, many of these same people often confess that they actually prefer the taste of real ground beef. It's especially a shame if they've been buying regular ground turkey and not ground turkey breast.

Why? The plain ground turkey is not as lean as the readily available extra-lean ground beef. The bottom line: Ground turkey breast is super-lean, but extra-lean ground beef is a perfectly good option, especially if the difference in taste is important to you.

So relax. Beef and pork can fit nicely into a healthy, well-balanced diet. But don't just take my word for it. Check out this chart from the USDA nutrition database, which compares the nutritional breakdown of various protein sources.

For beef and pork with minimum fat content, look for cuts with the words "loin" or "round" in the name. In restaurants, order filet (which is from the tenderloin cut) or New York strip (from the top loin cut). Always trim any visible fat before cooking. Choosing ground beef at the supermarket can be tricky, since the "percent lean" labeling is based on weight. Select 90% lean beef or higher (95% or 96% extra-lean ground beef is best); anything less than 90% isn't really so lean as you might think.

The bottom line: There's nothing wrong with poultry and seafood if you choose to stay on that course. Just be wary of burnout. Most people can go only so long before they find themselves swinging into the drive-through to order a double cheeseburger!

So this Father's Day, treat Dad to a great filet mignon or a burger made with extra-lean ground beef. Rest assured that you will not only be making his taste buds happy, but you'll also be keeping him healthy.

Serving Size (3 ounces, cooked)	Calories	Protein (grams)	Total Fat (grams)	Saturated Fat (grams)
Chicken Breast, Skinless	142	26	3	0.9
Salmon	175	19	10.5	2.1
Ground Turkey Breast	120	26	1.5	0.5
Ground Turkey	193	22	10.8	2.8
95% Lean Ground Beef	145	22	5.6	2.5
Filet Mignon	164	24	6.7	2.5
Pork Tenderloin	122	22	3	1
Pork Chop, Center-cut	144	25	4.3	1.5

Source: USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, [www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp](http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp).

## Recipes

### Moorish Pork With Horseradish Sour Cream

Courtesy of Vega Tapas Café

Serves eight

2 pork tenderloins  
8 bamboo skewers

#### Brine:

1 tbsp. red chili flakes  
3 tbsp. ground cumin  
3 tbsp. ground coriander  
1/4 cup Spanish smoked paprika  
3 tbsp. crushed oregano  
2 tbsp. fresh nutmeg  
1/4 cup brown sugar

#### Horseradish sour cream:

1 cup sour cream  
1/8 cup grated horseradish  
3 tbsp. minced red onion  
3 tbsp. rice wine vinegar  
salt and pepper



**Directions:** In a mixing bowl, combine brine ingredients. Generously coat pork with dry rub. Place in a covered pan and refrigerate for 24 hours. Combine all ingredients for sour cream and gently fold together. Add salt and fresh ground pepper to taste. This should be prepared ahead of time and refrigerated to serve later.

After marinating, cut pork into 1 1/2-inch discs and skewer against meat grain onto skewers. When using wooden skewers, make sure to soak in water approximately 1 hour. Portion each skewer with four or five pieces per person.

Lightly coat each skewer with cooking oil and place on very hot grill. Grill each side 2-3 minutes.

Arrange portions atop couscous or other accompaniment. (Vega Tapas Café serves atop flash-fried baby spinach) along with a dollop of sour cream. Enjoy!

#### Nutrition Facts per Serving:

175 calories; 28 g protein; 2 g carbohydrate; 6 g total fat; 1 g saturated fat; less than 50 mg sodium

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