

COOK'S

ILLUSTRATED

GLAZED ALL-BEEF MEATLOAF

Serves 6 to 8. Published January 1, 2006.

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

To create an all-beef meatloaf recipe that could compete with a recipe made with meatloaf mix, we used equal parts ground chuck and sirloin, which provided just the right balance of juicy, tender meat and assertive beefy flavor. Chicken broth was a surprisingly successful add-in; it transformed the loaf from liver-y to savory. To replace the gelatin that was lost with the ground veal in the meatloaf mix, we used a mere half-teaspoon of powdered gelatin to give the texture of our glazed meatloaf a luxurious smoothness.

If you can't find chuck and/or sirloin, substitute any 85 percent lean ground beef. Handle the meat gently; it should be thoroughly combined but not pastelike. To avoid using the broiler, glaze the loaf in a 500-degree oven; increase cooking time for each interval by 2 to 3 minutes.

INGREDIENTS

Meatloaf

- 3 ounces Monterey Jack cheese , grated on small holes of box grater (about 1 cup)
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 medium onion , chopped fine (about 1 cup)
- 1 medium rib celery , chopped fine (about 1/2 cup)
- 1 medium clove garlic , minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 1 teaspoon)
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 cup tomato juice
- 1/2 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon unflavored gelatin (powdered)
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 2/3 cup crushed saltine crackers
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley leaves
- 3/4 teaspoon table salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 pound ground sirloin
- 1 pound ground beef chuck

Glaze

- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1 teaspoon hot pepper sauce

- 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/4 cup cider vinegar
- 3 tablespoons packed light brown sugar

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position; heat oven to 375 degrees. Spread cheese on plate and place in freezer until ready to use. Prepare baking sheet (see illustration below).
2. Heat butter in 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat until foaming; add onion and celery and cook, stirring occasionally, until beginning to brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Add garlic, thyme, and paprika and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Reduce heat to low and add tomato juice. Cook, stirring to scrape up browned bits from pan, until thickened, about 1 minute. Transfer mixture to small bowl and set aside to cool.
3. Whisk broth and eggs in large bowl until combined. Sprinkle gelatin over liquid and let stand 5 minutes. Stir in soy sauce, mustard, saltines, parsley, salt, pepper, and onion mixture. Crumble frozen cheese into coarse powder and sprinkle over mixture. Add ground beef; mix gently with hands until thoroughly combined, about 1 minute. Transfer meat to foil rectangle and shape into 10 by 6-inch oval about 2 inches high. Smooth top and edges of meatloaf with moistened spatula. Bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted into center of loaf reads 135 to 140 degrees, 55 to 65 minutes. Remove meatloaf from oven and turn on broiler.
4. While meatloaf cooks, combine ingredients for glaze in small saucepan; bring to simmer over medium heat and cook, stirring, until thick and syrupy, about 5 minutes. Spread half of glaze evenly over cooked meatloaf with rubber spatula; place under broiler and cook until glaze bubbles and begins to brown at edges, about 5 minutes. Remove meatloaf from oven and spread evenly with remaining glaze; place back under broiler and cook until glaze is again bubbling and beginning to brown, about 5 minutes more. Let meatloaf cool about 20 minutes before slicing.

RECIPE TESTING

Troubleshooting Meatloaf

Here are two problems we encountered when making meatloaf -- and the steps we now take to avoid them.



PROBLEM: Meatloaf sits in an unappealing pool of grease.

SOLUTION: Baking directly on a sheet pan provides no outlet for exuded grease. A foil base, poked with holes and set on a cooling rack, lets juices drain as the loaf cooks.

PROBLEM: Sides of meatloaf remain crustless.

SOLUTION: Loaf pans expose only one side of the meatloaf to browning heat. By opting for a free-form loaf, we achieved an all-over browned crust.

STEP-BY-STEP**Creating a Free-Form "Loaf Pan"**

Allowing meat loaf to stew in its own juices makes for a greasy mess. Here's our solution: Fold heavy-duty aluminum foil to form a 10 by 6-inch rectangle. Center the foil on a metal cooling rack and place the rack over a rimmed baking sheet. Poke holes in the foil with a skewer (about half an inch apart). Spray the foil with nonstick cooking spray.



America's Test Kitchen is a 2,500-square-foot kitchen located just outside of Boston. It is the home of Cook's Country and Cook's Illustrated magazines and is the workday destination for more than three dozen test cooks, editors, and cookware specialists. Our mission is to test recipes until we understand how and why they work and arrive at the best version. We also test kitchen equipment and supermarket ingredients in search of brands that offer the best value and performance. You can watch us work by tuning in to America's Test Kitchen (www.americastestkitchen.com) on public television.