

Celebrate a successful hunt with a fine meal

For many of you your hunt-ing season is over and for many of you it is in full swing. But regardless of what stage you’re in, I thought it might be timely to publish a short article on some wild meat recipes that my family likes.

Hopefully you filled a tag. Happy eating!

FLANKS & TRI-TIPS

You can marinate them for an hour or two (I don’t always) then I heavily sprinkle McCormick’s coarse ground steak seasoning over them.

On the flank steak after sprin- kling on the seasoning, I then chop up some onions and green peppers and lay them on the flank. Then I roll it up and pin it together with toothpicks. You can presoak the toothpicks in water so they don’t burn up as easily.

I smoke them on low heat for an hour on my Camp Chef pellet grill and then turn up the heat to about 300. When done, pull off and



BASE CAMP
TOM CLAYCOMB

slice paper-thin across grain. These make great hors d’oeuvres.

FORE QUARTER

The third most tender muscle on the carcass is in the shoulder — if you cook it slowly. Sprinkle the shoulder with your favorite season- ing salt. Smoke it on low heat (140) for three hours. I used to lay bacon strips over it but haven’t in 25 years. Then put it in a black turkey roasting pan and put in about 2 to 3 cups of water. Put it in the oven all night at 185. If you wake up in the middle of the night, check on it. If it runs out of water, it is ruined. If it is low, add a cup or two.

When you wake up, if it falls off the bone with a fork, it is done. If not, turn the heat up to 300. After cooking all night, it should finish in 30 to 45 minutes. When done, pull all the meat off

of the bone and chop into about ¼- to ½-inch chunks. Sprinkle with Lawry’s seasoning salt to taste. Toast buns slightly in a black skillet on both sides with a little butter. Throw on a handful of chopped meat and douse with your favorite barbecue sauce. I use original Kraft and a little Tabasco sauce. You’ll eat at least three.

CHICKEN-FRIED BACKSTRAP STEAK (TOP ROUND)

I chicken fry these. My wife beats them with a tenderizer and sprinkles on Adolph Tenderizer. Let it sit for 15 minutes.

I dip them in milk and roll in flour sprinkled with salt and pep- per. I fry them in a black skillet un- til golden brown. I like them cooked medium but my wife cooks them a little crispy and that’s great too.

I always make milk gravy with my chicken-fried steak. Another twist is to sauté onions and make onion gravy and garlic toast. This is one of my most favorite meats in the world.



Tom Claycomb photo

Use the inside and outside skirts from a deer to make a batch of fajitas. Perfect on a cold night.

TENDERLOIN

These are the filet mignons of the deer. I like to marinate mine for an hour or two and then put on my seasoning. Right now, I’m favoring the coarse-ground McCormick’s seasoning. Put your grill on medium

to low heat. Eat medium rare to medium. Also great for kabobs. Big game meat doesn’t have marbling (intermuscular fat), which makes it drier than beef. So you want to cook it slower and not for as long or at such high temperatures.



Eastern Oregon University photo

ABOVE: Eastern Oregon University microbiology professor Joe Corsini, left, shared his paleontology expertise, assisting anthropology professors Rory Becker and Linda Reed-Jerofke in leading a dig of a prehistoric mammoth or mastodon in mid-October near Prineville.

AT RIGHT: Bones believed to be from a prehistoric mammoth or a mastodon arrived at Eastern Oregon University wrapped in plaster. The cranium was transported in a large crate of sediment to ensure safe transport.

BONES

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Knife River contacted Craig Woodward, the owner of the sand and gravel field, to report the find.

“It was (Woodward’s) mammoth, and we wanted him to be able to see it as it was found. He was very impressed,” said Tony Spilde, director of communications for Knife River.

Woodward, a graduate of Eastern Oregon University, contacted his alma mater to assist in the recovery of the specimen. The 72-year-old died just a month after the discovery of the site. Shortly afterward, university faculty visited the area and agreed to conduct an excavation of the partially fossilized bones at a later date. Faculty and students returned in the fall to perform the dig.

“It would have been great if he could have watched the faculty and students from EOU — they were true professionals, and it was great to work with them,” Spilde said.

Following the discovery, the specimen was re-buried by the construction workers. Knife River declined to provide a specific location as the site is owned by the Wood- ward family, and the com- pany wants to prevent people from making unauthorized archaeological searches.

In mid-October, university staff and students returned to the site to extract the

partially fossilized bones over the course of four days. The remains were taken back to the EOU campus in La Grande.

Recovered bones include the cranium, a front arm (humerus, ulna, radius) and several vertebrae and ribs, according to Rory Becker, the anthropology and archaeol- ogy professor who led the dig.

A portion of the tusks nearest the cranium are still intact, but the tusks in general are in poor condition, said Becker, adding that the animal was probably a juve- nile, based on the structure of the long bones.

Becker, who in recent years has been part of teams that studied Neanderthal cave sites in Croatia, said it’s not clear why the majority of the bones went missing. Further analysis of the bones and the sediment around them could provide answers, he said.

Other questions, such as what killed the animal and how many years ago it lived, are yet to be determined. Becker believes the research could last three to five years.

The team will try to determine if the animal was a mammoth or a mastodon — the two are distinct animals but remains of both have been found in North America.

Mastodons were shorter and stockier than mammoths, with shorter tusks. Scientists pay particular attention to the teeth — mammoth molars had flat surfaces

designed for chewing grass while mastodon molars have pointed cones adapted for munching on leaves, twigs and branches.

Peaches’ mandible and teeth are covered with sedi- ment. The next stage of the project will reveal that part of the specimen.

The remains of the animal are expected to go on public view upon completion of the research. No official name has been given yet to the specimen, but Becker said “The Woodward Mammoth” is being considered.

In addition to the science that can be learned from the find, Becker said the project served as an outstanding, real-world project for stu- dents, and one that may help a few decide on a career path.

“As is generally the case with doing fieldwork for the first time, some folks really take to it, and for others, once is probably enough,” said Becker, adding that the ex- perience could help students make education and career choices.

The partial skeleton is so far the only such specimen discovered at Woodward’s gravel site. Comstock, the excavator who dug up the bones, believes there could be more.

“We have a lot more dig- ging out there so who knows what we’ll find next,” he said. “You never know what the next scoop of the digger will give you.”



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