

Break those old eating habits



outdoors

Bill Parker

ONE OF THE biggest problems with eating wild game is that many self-proclaimed chefs only know how to fry or roast the meat. I've been eating venison, for instance, for as long as I can remember, but only in the past three or four years have I strayed from pan-fried steaks.

Now, Rob Garner (of Michigan Outdoors fame) and another wild game connoisseur, for that matter, would be quick to point out what I've been missing. And I would have to agree. My taste buds have been deprived. It's just that old habits are hard to break.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with sprinkling a little garlic powder on a thick, juicy venison chop while it simmers in a mixture of butter, onions and mushrooms. (And nothing will get my attention quicker than the aroma of the above.) But there are other ways to prepare a tasty plate of meat.

RECIPES call for ground beef, steak, roast or stew meat usually taste as good or better when the meat substituted is venison, elk, rabbit or squirrel. Pheasant, partridge and wild turkey meat also work exceptionally well in casseroles or

other dishes that call for chicken or turkey. Don't be afraid to experiment.

There are also wild game cookbooks — such as "The Wildlife Chef" (available through the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, P.O. Box 30235, Lansing 48909), "Savor the Wild" and "Fish and Game Menu Cookbook" (both of which were written by nationally known wildlife cook Kay L. Hitchey) and are available through Sportsman's Outdoor Enterprises Inc., P.O. Box 912, Gravon, Mich. 49537.)

BEFORE COOKING any meat, be sure to clean it thoroughly. I always practice that habit. Freeze ham and remove any tallow or excessive fat. Also watch for hair and bone chips. Meat that is processed by the weekend butcher in his basement or garage is often loaded with bone chips — not because it's a bad pro-

cessing job, but because it's much quicker to cut through the bones than to remove them completely. If you prefer to do your own butchering, take time to remove the bones and avoid bone chips completely. A little time spent trimming fat and tendon makes a big difference in the quality of the finished meat.

Also, remember to always be extra careful when skinning game and try to avoid getting any hair on the meat.

GAMEY OR WILD-tasting meat will lose some of that wild taste if you marinate the meat. Zesty Italian salad dressing is a great marinade. If you leave it in the meat for more than an hour or two, the meat will taste of heavy vinegar. Buttermilk also works well in diluting a strong gamey taste.

If you like to have your venison or other meat ground, try adding some

beef and pork to it. One combination that works well calls for a ground mixture of 40-percent beef, 20-percent pork and 40-percent venison. The beef and pork add spice and fat, while the overall composition of the meat remains very lean. Again, if you take time to clean the meat, even though you are going to grind it, the finished product will be much more appealing to your taste buds.

AN ALTERNATIVE to frying and a very quiet and simple way to prepare steaks or chops is to coat the meat with pork rinds Shake-N-Bake and cook for 10-15 minutes in a cooking bag. The Shake-N-Bake coating adds a little zest to the flavor while cooking the meat in a cooking bag retains the natural juice and moisture. Try a little apple or grape jelly instead of steak sauce. It's a nice, sweet change.

Don't think you need an extravagant recipe for the meat to taste good. Some of the best pheasant I've ever had was cooked at a deer camp with bare essentials. We used eggs and saltine cracker crumbs for a batter, and we fried the meat in bacon grease. It was fabulous.

The bottom line is to experiment. Don't get stuck in a rut.

outdoors calendar

IMPORTANT EVENTS AND DATES

• Jan. 14 — Great Lakes Forum focusing on Clinton River water quality, will be held at 9 a.m. at the St. Clair Shores Recreation Center (24800 Jefferson Ave., between Nine and 10 Mile roads). For more information, call 258-5188.

• Fly Tying Classes, offered by the Challenge Chapter of Trout Unlimited, will be held Mondays for 10 weeks beginning at 7 p.m. Jan. 16, at Birmingham Seaholm High School. The courses are for beginners and advanced fly tiers. Registration fee is \$25. For more information, or to register, call 433-8444.

• Jan. 21-22 — Tip-up Town on Houghton Lake.

• Jan. 25 and Feb. 1 — Ice Fishing Class, sponsored by the West Bloomfield Community Education Department, will be held at West Bloomfield High School beginning at 7 p.m. each night. For more information, call 476-7600.

• Through Jan. 31 — Mink season is open statewide.

• Jan. 25 — Ice Fishing Class, offered by the West Bloomfield

Schools and taught by Joe Derek, will be offered at 7 p.m. at West Bloomfield High School. Class fee is \$6. For reservations, call 851-7600.

• Feb. 1 — Monthly meeting of the Four Seasons Fishing Club begins at 7 p.m. at the Maplewood Center in Garden City. The public may attend.

• Feb. 1 — Final day to apply for the 1989 Spring Wild Turkey Hunt.

• Feb. 1 — Final day to submit project proposals for the Inland Fisheries Cooperative Grants Program. Call (517) 373-1200 for details.

• Feb. 27 — Final day for artists to submit entries in the trout/salmon and waterfall stamp design contests. Call (517) 373-1280 or (517) 373-1263 for details.

• Feb. 3-5 and 10-12 — Southeast Michigan Camper and RV Show will be held at the Michigan State Fair Coliseum.

• Feb. 4-12 — Detroit Boat Show at Cobo Hall.

• Feb. 9-12 — Fishing Expo at Cobo Hall.

• Feb. 11 — Michigan Deer Camp '89, sponsored by Whitetails

Unlimited, the camp includes a prime-rib dinner, door prizes, raffles and guest speakers and will be held at the Valley Plaza Inn in Midland. Call (414) 743-6777 for more information.

• Feb. 17-26 — Detroit Outdoors Sport and Travel Show will be held at the Michigan State Fair Coliseum.

• Through March 1 — Bobcat season in Zeeb Land and limited areas of Zone 1 (consult Michigan Hunting and Trapping Guide for details).

• Through March 1 — Fox season is open statewide.

• Commemorative Bucks of Michigan — the official record keeper of big game animals in Michigan — in conjunction with the Michigan DNR, is conducting its annual big game awards program. Brochures are available at all DNR field offices or by contacting CBRM at 3215 Old Farm Lane, Walled Lake, Mich. 48088, phone 699-7576.

• Feb. 18-19 — Michigan State Park Motor Vehicle Permits are available for \$10. The permits cover entry to all 86 state park and recreation areas. Permits are available at all 86 state park and recreation areas.

at all 42 Meijer Retail Stores, at all DNR offices and from the DNR Information Service Center, P.O. Box 30028, Lansing, Mich. 48909, phone (517) 373-1220.

OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS

• Observe & Eccentric Ski School, offering instruction on proper use of equipment, warm-up exercises, the diagonal stride (a popular ski technique), how to get up from a fall, how to ski up and down hills and the beautiful sights of skiing will be offered at Addison Oaks and Independence Oaks every Saturday (weather permitting) Jan. 14 to Feb. 25. Addison Oaks will hold clinics at 9 and 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. during January only and Independence Oaks will hold clinics at 9 and 11 a.m. in January and February.

(Myrna Partrich, co-owner of The Workout Company of Bloomfield Township, is happy to answer any questions readers may have regarding exercise. Please send your letters to: Sports Department, Myrna Partrich, 1225 Bowers, Birmingham 48021.)

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**CROSS-COUNTRY
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Cross-country skiing is a fun, exciting and healthful way to enjoy the outdoors this winter. You can learn to cross-country ski at the Observer & Eccentric Ski School at several neighborhood locations in Oakland and Wayne Counties. Clinics begin in January (weather permitting).

12 includes equipment rental and 1 1/2 hour ski lesson

6 (with your own equipment)

*Non-resident fees may be higher

Due to limited space availability, pre-registration is required. For complete registration information, call any nearby site listed below, Monday through Friday, at least one week in advance of lesson.

Observer & Eccentric Cross Country Ski School locations:

ADDISON OAKS COUNTY PARK
1480 West Ramro Road
Oxford, MI 48051
693-2432



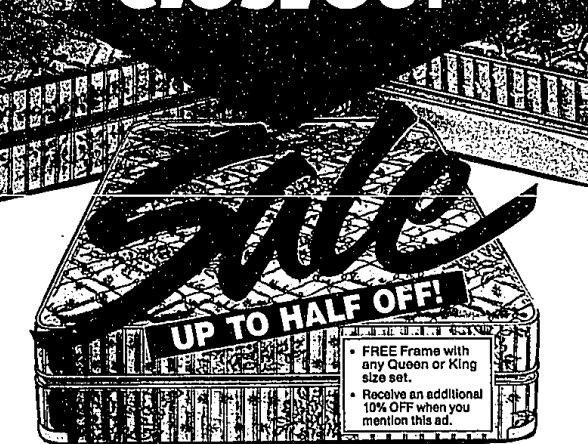
**INDEPENDENCE OAKS
COUNTY PARK**
c/o Oakland County Parks & Recreation
9501 Sashabaw Road
Clarkston, MI 48016
825-0077

MAYBURY STATE PARK
c/o Northville Community Recreation
303 West Main Street
Northville, MI 48167
349-0203

WARREN VALLEY GOLF COURSE
c/o Wayne County Parks & Recreation
33175 Ann Arbor Trail
Westland, MI 48185
261-1990

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31555 Eleven Mile Road
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