

Field Dressing Deer

Each year thousands of hunters are fortunate enough to bag a big white-tailed deer. You enjoy the memory of successful deer hunt each time you serve some tasty [venison](#). To ensure fresh, good tasting deer meat you must know what to do when you get your deer.

By knowing how to handle your deer promptly from the field to the cooking pan you will be able to enjoy many delicious venison dinners.

Where to Start

First you must tag the deer with the temporary tag attached to your deer permit. If you are exempt from hunting with a permit, you must attach a homemade tag with your name and address and the date and time the deer was killed.

Field Dressing

Field dressing-removing the deer's entrails- is not difficult, but it is the most important step to good venison. Just roll up your sleeves and get to it. The principle is the same as with small game. The important things are to keep the carcass clean and to cool the meat quickly. You will need a sharp, sturdy [hunting knife](#).

Preliminary Steps

Some hunters prefer to remove the scent glands on the inside of the hind legs. This step can be omitted, but take care that the meat does not contact the gland area. "Bleeding" or cutting the deer's neck is not necessary. Blood removal is accomplished by field dressing.

The First Cut

Place the deer on its back. Starting at the anus, cut through the skin and body wall along the center line. The center line extends along the underside of the deer from the anus to the center of the diaphragm. Use your fingers to guide the knife and keep the blade away from the stomach and intestines. Make the first cut by keeping the knife at a low angle and cutting only deep enough to slice through the skin.



Continue Cutting

Cut the length of the carcass, opening the chest cavity by cutting through the breast bone. Cut deeply around the anus to loosen the intestine. Split the pelvic bone by slicing through its center with a sturdy knife or cutting through with a small saw or hand ax.

Save the Heart and Liver

The diaphragm separates the chest and body cavities and must be cut away. Reach inside the chest cavity and loosen the heart and liver from connective tissues. Take along a plastic bag to put them in if you wish to keep them.

Loosen the windpipe and gullet by cutting through them as far forward into the neck area as you can reach.

Deer is Just Like a Big Rabbit

Roll the carcass on its side so you can remove the entrails. Most of the entrails will pull away easily. Carefully cut and loosen any connective tissues.

Cool it Quickly

Wipe the body cavity clean and remove any remaining tissues and damaged flesh. Prop the body cavity open by inserting a stick in the rib cage.

The entrails should be buried, covered with leaves, or placed in an inconspicuous place. Never field dress a deer along a roadway.

Transporting

Keep your deer clean and cool. If possible, don't haul it atop your vehicle. Keep it away from engine



fumes, heat, and dirt. Be certain to have your deer tagged at a deer checking station.

Hang the Deer By the Hind Legs

The carcass should be aged before skinning and processing. If the outside temperature is in the 35 to 40 degree F range the deer can safely hang and age for a week. If the temperature is warmer you should skin the deer and age the meat in a refrigerator or cooler.

Skinning

Skinning is easiest when the deer is hanging by its back legs, first cut the skin around the lower part of the back legs and slit them on the inside, down to the pelvis. Peel the hide by pulling with one hand and rutting the difficult places with a knife in the other hand. Using a balled fist behind the hide and carcass helps separate skin without tearing. Take care not to let the hair touch the meat. When you reach the front legs, cut and skin them the same as the rear legs.

Preserve that Trophy

If you want to have your trophy deer head mounted, take care when you hide intact as far back as the rear of the rest of the work. Save the have it tanned or sell it to a fur

Freezing

Freezing is the best and most venison. Prompt freezing preserves meat so it will be at its best when

Trim away the heavy fat from the strong flavor that most people do not

The venison can be wrapped as soon use wraps or packages made for containers should prevent the venison. Package the meat in for your family.

The packages should be marked package and the date it was frozen. it has been frozen.

Additional Processing Tips

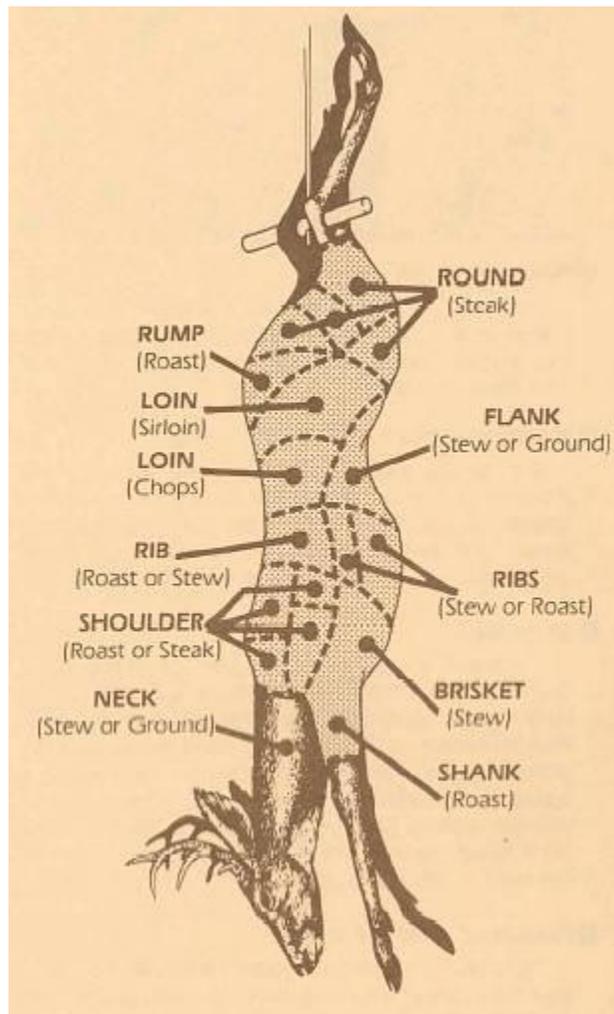
- > Common Sense Tips for Handling from WILD Ohio.
- > The World Health Organization has infect humans. However, you should or otherwise unhealthy. Also, you precautions when field dressing and
- > Do not eat any part of a deer that
- > Do not eat eyes, brain, spinal cord, any deer.

FIELD DRESSING

- > Wear rubber or latex gloves.
- > Minimize contact with the brain, spinal cord, spleen, and lymph nodes (lumps of tissue next to organs or in fat and membranes) as you work.



skin your deer. Leave the head and the shoulder. Let the taxidermist do remainder of the deer hide and buyer.



convenient way of preserving your the freshness and flavor of the cooked.

meat. The fat gives venison a like.

as the cuts are made. Be sure to freezing. These wrapping papers or passage of moisture and air into the appropriate sized dinner portions

telling the cut of meat in the Use the venison within a year after

and Processing Venison adapted

found no evidence that CWD can never eat a deer that appears sick should take some general processing wild game.

appears to be sick.

spleen, tonsils, or lymph nodes of

- Remove all internal organs.
- Clean knives and equipment in a 50/50 solution of chlorine bleach and water for 1 hour. Wipe down counters and let them dry.

CUTTING AND PROCESSING

- Wear rubber or latex gloves.
- Minimize handling brain or spinal tissues. If removing antlers, use a saw designated for that purpose only, then dispose of the blade.
- Do not cut through the spinal column except to remove the head. Use a knife designated only for this purpose.
- Bone out the meat from the deer and remove all fat and connective tissue (the web-like membranes attached to the meat). This should also remove lymph nodes.
- Dispose of hide, brain and spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils, bones, and head in a landfill or by other means available in your area.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize equipment and work areas with 50 percent bleach solution after processing.

Venison (ven-i-son): Most often associated with the meat of deer used as food, but it also includes the meat of other large game animals such as moose, elk, caribou, and antelope. As with the meat of other large animals, it is eaten as steaks, roasts, sausages and ground meat. Organ meats are sometimes eaten but would not be called venison; rather, they are called humble, as in the phrase "humble pie". Venison is lower in food energy, cholesterol and fat than common cuts of beef, pork or lamb.