



Assured British game by British Game Assurance



Guide to Cooking Game

www.eatwild.co
www.wildmeat.co.uk

Think differently about game



Learn to cook
wild game like
never before

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Delicate partridge. Rich & complex grouse. Subtle, tender pheasant. Juicy & flavoursome mallard.

Cooking wild game is a breeze with this handy guide, produced by The Wild Meat Company and British Game Assurance (BGA). Keep it within reach to check cooking times, temperatures and tips for all your game-based meals, from 10- minute suppers to impressive Sunday feasts.

The Wild Meat Company has been sharing Robert Gooch's and Paul Denny's passion for wild game since 1999. Our online shop, selling quick-cooking fillets, steaks and oven-ready joints and game birds, makes it easy for people to cook delicious game-based meals at home.

BGA brings you the best wild game, produced to high welfare and environmental standards.

BGA game is the only assured game there is, and can only be found through BGA suppliers like The Wild Meat Company.

If anyone knows how to cook wild game perfectly every time, it's The Wild Meat Company and the BGA. And if you follow the simple steps in this booklet, you'll soon be an expert too!

Best wishes,

The Wild Meat Company
and British Game Assurance



Why choose wild game?

Want to reduce your carbon footprint, improve your diet, and enjoy tastier and more interesting meals? Make wild game a regular part of your menu!

As delicious in curries and stir-fries as it is in a luxurious roast with all the trimmings, wild game is flavourful, sustainable and versatile, offering a little something for everyone at a price you can afford.

These are just a few reasons you should eat. Wild, and you'll find more over the following pages. Trust us - you won't soon turn back to chicken.



Flavour & Versatility

Of course, one of the main reasons to choose wild game is its delicious taste! Enhanced by the natural flavours of the animals' foraged diets, game is much tastier than mass-produced meat. Those who treat themselves to a full-flavoured wild venison steak instead of their usual beef never look back! It's simple to swap other farmed meats for other types of game too. Use pheasant or partridge in a curry or stir fry instead of chicken, or pan fry a couple of partridge or wood pigeon breasts for a quick and tasty weeknight meal. Try a rabbit ragu instead of beef, or pop a wild duck in the oven for a tasty Sunday roast. Wild game is incredibly versatile, full of flavour and easy to cook.



Welfare

Game birds and animals enjoy wild and natural lives in the countryside, making them the ultimate free-range food. Game species are also spared the stress of the slaughterhouse and the truck journey there, as they are dispatched with minimal stress in their own familiar surroundings.

Healthy

A diet is only sustainable if it's healthy and provides all the nutrients we need. Opting for wild game is a simple way to continue to eat meat as part of a conscientious, balanced diet. Wild meat is lower in fat and cholesterol than farmed meat and a great source of iron, protein, vitamin B6 and selenium, which are essential for a healthy body and mind. The active, natural life and varied diet of game birds and animals creates leaner meat that's high in vitamins and minerals.

Sustainable

Wild game has a lower carbon footprint than meat from traditionally farmed animals, which needs significantly more land, animal feed and energy. For this reason, game is becoming an increasingly popular choice for conscientious eaters – and the meat from species culled to protect threatened native species is considered an especially ethical choice. For additional peace of mind when seeking sustainable wild meat, look for the BCA logo. Assured game is produced according to strict regulations covering responsible and sustainable practices regarding the way animals and birds are reared, handled and stored.

PHEASANT SEASON: October – February
PARTRIDGE SEASON: September – February
FLAVOURS: Sweet and subtly gamey
NUTRITION: Low in fat, high in protein and good sources of iron, zinc and selenium

Pheasant & Partridge

With their mild and moreish flavours, pheasant and partridge are ideal introductions to game. Partridge is the slightly sweeter of the two birds, but both are gently flavoured. Versatile and easy to cook, they're staples for many throughout the autumn and winter. As they freeze so well, they can also be used in place of chicken for lean and nutritious meals in the warmer months too.

Whole pheasants are delicious roasted, casseroled, braised, in curries or pot roasted. One pheasant will feed two people as part of a main course, or can be stretched to feed four if served with extra accompaniments.

Whole partridges are also superb roasted or pot roasted. As they're smaller birds, you'll need to allow one per person.



Pheasant and partridge breast fillets can be pan-fried, stir-fried, casseroled, or curried. For main courses, allow one or two pheasant fillets or three partridge fillets per person.

Pheasant and partridge are also ideal for cooking in air fryers; marinate them before in either tandoori spices or a miso soy mix to really enhance the flavours and also trap in the moisture. It means cooking for the entire family is quick, mess free and very easy. You may want to remove the legs and let the crown to continue to cook so they don't dry out.

If you have removed the legs before roasting then you can slow cook them to remove the meat from the bones & the sinuet will breakdown.



OUR TOP TIPS

If you are going to roast a pheasant, we recommend removing the legs and only cooking the crown.

If you do want to cook a whole bird, wrap in foil or a cooking bag. For crispy skin, remove the foil 10 minutes before the end of the cooking time.

Game birds are lean and need additional fat. Before cooking, marinate the meat, rub the skin with butter and/or layer it with bacon.

For succulent roast pheasant or partridge, fill the cavity with a moist stuffing, e.g. an onion, apple and fresh herbs or sausage meat with prunes and shallots.

Baste game birds while roasting and take care not to overcook them or let the meat become dry. Basting also enhances the flavour.

Like all meat, you need to allow a good amount of time for pheasant and partridge to rest after cooking.

FLAVOUR PARTNERS

FRUITS

apples, redcurrants, prunes, pears, apricots, elderberries.

HERBS

bay, sage, thyme, garlic, parsley.

SPICES

cumin, coriander, paprika, juniper, pepper, cinnamon.

VEGETABLES

parsnips, leeks, mushrooms, pumpkin, chicory.

VENISON SEASON: Year-round
FLAVOURS: Rich, earthy, slightly sweet
NUTRITION: Contains more iron and protein than any other red meat, rich in Omega-3 and B vitamins

Venison

Lean, tender and full of crowd-pleasing flavour, wild venison's popularity has boomed in recent years. Its credentials as a sustainable alternative have helped it find many of its newest fans. Deer damage the habitats of threatened flora and fauna, and populations of native and invasive species have swelled to such large numbers that culling them is now essential. This makes British wild venison a highly ethical meat choice with a much lower carbon footprint than farmed meats.

The natural life and foraged diet of wild deer gives its dark meat a deep, rich flavour and herbaceous notes. It also makes it incredibly lean and nutrient dense – and a healthier choice than farmed meats, including farmed venison. Different species vary in flavour and texture. Meat from fallow deer is finer textured than that from the mighty red. The tiny muntjac has the mildest flavour and is an ideal introduction to wild venison.



Versatile wild venison can be used instead of beef and lamb in many recipes with delicious results. And once you've tried a wild venison burger, chilli or steak, the beef versions will never seem as appetising again!

Roast haunches are perfect for Sunday lunches or dinner parties, while butterflied haunches or whole muntjacs are impressive centrepieces that can be cooked on a barbecue or open fire. The shanks are superb slow-cooked, while mouthwatering juicy steaks, chops and tenderloin fillets are quick and easy to pan-fry. Meanwhile, for everyday meals, venison mince can be used in place of beef or lamb mince to add depth to a huge range of dishes from tacos, koftes and curries to Bolognese and cottage pie.



OUR TOP TIPS

- Bring wild venison to room temperature before cooking.
- Marinate steaks or rub in oil and season before pan-frying briefly over a high heat until medium-rare.
- Joints should also be marinated or rubbed in oil and seasoned (or add extra flavour by coating them in a dry rub) before being roasted in foil.
- Slow cook or casserole shoulders and shanks at a low temperature.
- Cover and rest joints and steaks before serving.
- Cook wild venison mince as you would lean beef mince, adding oil or fat for succulence. Amazing in chilli or as a bolognese.

FLAVOUR PARTNERS

- FRUITS:** quince, apples, pears, cherries, prunes, plums, blackberries, pomegranate
- HERBS:** thyme, rosemary, bay, sage, marjoram, garlic
- SPICES:** juniper, black pepper, allspice, paprika, chilli, mustard, cumin, coriander
- VEGETABLES:** celeriac, carrots, parsnips, beetroot, red cabbage, kale, mushrooms

WILD DUCK SEASON: September - February
WOOD PIGEON SEASON: Year-round
GROUSE SEASON: August - December
FLAVOURS: Deep, complex, distinctive
NUTRITION: Rich in iron (especially wood pigeon and wild duck) and protein (particularly grouse)

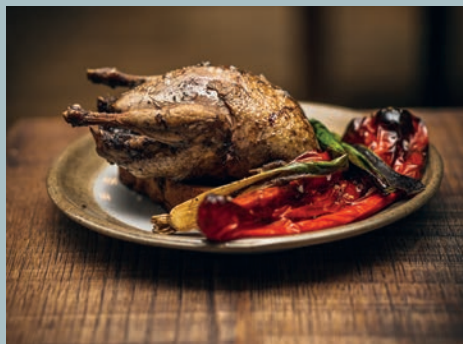
Mallard, Wood Pigeon and Grouse

Wild duck has less fat and a stronger flavour than farmed duck, and a richness that lends itself to a variety of dishes. The breast fillets, which are superb pan-fried, are also perfectly portioned for main courses. Wigeon and pintail are smaller and feed one to two people. Teal, meanwhile, is the smallest of the wild ducks but often considered the most exquisite in texture and flavour. No one will blame you for allowing yourself two!

Wood pigeon is the most plentiful edible wild bird and readily available throughout the year. Its beautiful rich and complex flavour lends itself to a wide range of dishes in every season. Whole birds can be roasted or casseroled, while the tender and succulent breast fillets are delicious pan-fried. Allow one whole bird per person or two breast fillets. It is ideal for a quick mid-week meal on a salad with some new potatoes as it can be cooked so quickly and is also very healthy.

Grouse is widely revered as the finest game bird of all, thanks to its inimitable rich flavour. Young birds are best savoured roasted while flavourful older ('overyeared') birds are excellent pot-roasted or casseroled. Allow one per person.

Like a little spice? Wild duck, wood pigeon and grouse can all hold up to strong flavours, making them ideal choices for curries, stir fries and tagines as well as simple suppers. If you wanted to make it easier, you could just add some of the Eat Wild spice mix from our shop.



OUR TOP TIPS

Grouse goes very well with cream and mushrooms so if you don't want to roast it, you can pan fry and pop on sourdough.

Before roasting whole ducks or fillets, pat the skin dry with kitchen paper, prick it, then sear in oil or duck fat.

When cooking mallard, grouse or pigeon, cook them rare or medium-rare as you would a steak, to keep them succulent.

Check wild duck, wood pigeon and grouse towards the end of their roasting times to ensure you don't overcook them. Cover and rest before serving.

Cover and rest the meat for as long as you cooked it for before serving.

FLAVOUR PARTNERS

FRUITS:

apple, quince, orange, raspberries, blackcurrants, elderberries, blackberries

HERBS:

thyme, rosemary, sage

SPICES:

juniper, pepper, star anise, cloves, coriander, cumin, chilli, ginger, cardamon

VEGETABLES:

mushrooms, parsnips, carrots, pumpkin, leeks, cabbage, chicory, celeriac

RABBIT SEASON:

Year-round

HARE SEASON:

August – February

SQUIRREL SEASON:

Year-round

FLAVOURS:

Subtly gamey and slightly sweet (rabbit and squirrel), rich and gamey (hare)

NUTRITION:

Rich in iron, protein and B vitamins, very low in fat

Rabbit, Hare and Squirrel

Wild rabbit is an abundant and highly sustainable meat. Rabbits are culled to limit the extensive damage they cause to crops and are available all year round for warming winter stews or tasty summer suppers. Often likened to chicken, wild rabbit meat has more flavour and a firmer texture. Young rabbits are superb roasted whole (especially with a little streaky bacon or chorizo), while older, larger ones are best braised or slow cooked in a stew or curry. As they are so lean, adding some fat – such as streaky bacon, yoghurt, cream or coconut milk – helps ensure tender and delicious results.

Hares have a much richer and stronger flavour but can only be sold between August and February. They have become less common nationally but can be sourced sustainably from East Anglia and other areas with high population densities, where they cause considerable crop damage if not controlled.

Leverets (hares under one year old) can be roasted but many people prefer slow-cooking to tenderise the back legs – and older hares should always be slow-cooked. However, the delicate loin fillets from the saddle can be flash fried and eaten rare.

Until recently, squirrel was rarely eaten in the UK. Now growing numbers of chefs and home cooks seeking out sustainable alternatives to farmed meats regularly enjoy its sweet and nutty flavour. With millions of this invasive species causing environmental and economic damage, meat from culled populations is a highly ethical choice for conscientious eaters. Its light-coloured meat tastes like a subtler version of rabbit with a finer texture. Like rabbit, it can be roasted, fried or barbecued but for tender meat that falls off the bone, cook them low and slow.



OUR TOP TIPS

Soak wild rabbit in salted water for a few hours (or overnight) before cooking.

If roasting whole or jointed young rabbits, hare or squirrel, toss in plenty of oil. Wrapping in streaky bacon will add further moisture.

Whole and jointed rabbits, hares and squirrels are most tender when cooked low and slow. Ensure your recipe includes bacon, chorizo, cream, butter or another source of fat.

The meat from slow-cooked rabbits, hare or squirrel can also be shredded and served as pulled meat or used in pasta sauces or Tex-Mex dishes.

Tender hare loin fillets can be removed from the bone and pan fried for a minute or two on each side.

FLAVOUR PARTNERS

FRUITS:

prunes, quince, apples, blackberries, cherries

HERBS:

sage, chervil, parsley, garlic, wild garlic, bay, thyme, rosemary

SPICES

juniper, star anise, black pepper, allspice, cloves, sumac, nutmeg, cinnamon

VEGETABLES:

tomatoes, celery, leeks, wild mushrooms, pumpkin, carrots, celeriac, red cabbage

Cooking times

We have created this quick and easy sheet so you know exactly how long to cook the different types of game.

Make sure to keep checking the meat throughout the cooking process as game can easily become dry and over cooked.

Meat	Roast	Other options
Pheasant	Fan - 180°C, Gas - 6 25 - 30 minutes depending on size of bird 15 minutes resting	Breasts - pan fry for 4-5 minutes on each side. Rest for 5 minutes Whole birds or breasts - Air fry All cuts - slow cook in a casserole or curry for 2 hours at 150°C Fan
Partridge	Fan - 180°C, Gas - 6 8 - 10 minutes depending on size of bird 15 - 20 minutes resting	Breasts - pan fry for 2 minutes on each side. Rest for 5 minutes Whole birds or breasts - Air fry All cuts - slow cook in a casserole or curry for 1 hour 30 minutes at 150°C Fan
Venison	Fan - 200°C, Gas - 6 12-15 mins per 1kg for rare to medium Rack, loin, fillet best - sear first in a pan till brown all over then put in oven	Steaks - pan fry for 2-3 minutes each side (rare), 4 mins each side (well done). Rest for 5-7 minutes Cutlets, T bones, burgers, grill steaks, sausages - BBQ
Grouse	Fan - 180°C, Gas - 6 12 - 15 minutes 12 minutes resting	Legs - slow cook for up to 4 hours at 150°C Fan then use them to make bons bons Breasts - pan fry or deep fry. Rest for 5 minutes
Pigeon	Fan - 180°C, Gas - 6 12 minutes 18 minutes resting	Breasts - pan fry for 2-3 minutes on each side. Rest for 5 minutes Whole birds or breasts - Air fry
Mallard	Fan - 180°C, Gas - 6 20 - 25 minutes 15 minutes resting	Breasts - pan fry for 5 minutes on one side, then 2-3 minutes on the other. Rest for 5 minutes Whole birds or breasts - Air fry Legs - remove from bird before roasting and slow cook instead



Meat	Roast	Other options
Rabbit	Fan - 180°C, Gas - 6 20 - 25 minutes 15 minutes resting Roast rabbit on the bone to keep it moist	Saddle and loin - pan fry for 20 minutes All cuts - slow cook for 2 hours at 130°C Fan
Squirrel	Squirrel does not roast well so if you do want to roast it you will need to turn it repeatedly	Whole - slow cook for 2 hours at 160°C Fan
Hare	Fan - 180°C, Gas - 6 60 - 90 minutes Saddle to be roasted only, legs will become too tough	Saddle and loin - pan fry for 4 minutes on each side. Rest 5 minutes All cuts - slow cook for a ragu for 3-4 hours at 150°C Fan

Swapping farmed meat for game could give you more of what you need.

Info below is g/100g unless otherwise stated.

VENISON

Protein	30
Calories	158
Fat	3.2
Iron	4.5mg

BEEF

Protein	26.1
Calories	235
Fat	15
Iron	2.7mg

CHICKEN

Protein	20.1
Calories	105
Fat	1.5
Iron	0.7mg

GROUSE

Protein	26
Calories	127
Fat	1
Iron	0.58mg

PARTRIDGE

Protein	26
Calories	126
Fat	2.4
Iron	3.77mg

PHEASANT

Protein	27.1
Calories	130
Fat	1.2
Iron	0.98mg

MALLARD

Protein	19.9
Calories	123
Fat	4.3
Iron	5mg

LAMB

Protein	19
Calories	187
Fat	12
Iron	1.9mg

RABBIT

Protein	21.9
Calories	137
Fat	5.5
Iron	1mg

SQUIRREL

Protein	18.1
Calories	102
Fat	2.7
Iron	4mg

WOOD PIGEON

Protein	26
Calories	187
Fat	7.9
Iron	7.2mg

HARE

Protein	29.9
Calories	192
Fat	8
Iron	10.8mg

We've already explained what makes wild game so special, but it's the nutritional value that really must be seen to be believed. See how wild game compares to other meats to get a real understanding of how it can positively impact your diet.

Ready to try wild game?

The Wild Meat Company is a BGA registered stockist that has a fantastic range of game products available to for delivery across the UK. Visit www.wildmeat.co.uk to find out more.

If you want recipe inspiration and more advice on how to cook game then head to www.eatwild.co for recipes, videos and advice from chefs.

When buying game you need to look for the British Game Assurance stamp to give you peace of mind that the game has come from a BGA producer who is adhering to high welfare and environmental standards.

Bigger isn't always better, the smaller birds can have more flavour than the larger ones so don't always just pick the biggest birds.

Meat should always be removed from the fridge an hour before cooking to bring it up to room temperature.

Meat can smell quite strongly when you remove it from any form of vacuum packaging so expect this when you first open it but this will disappear after a few minutes



"Game meat is better for you, with more nutrition than an intensively reared equivalent, with a much lighter tread on the planet. Game goes one better. The animals roam free in nature, foraging and packing in more protein and micro-nutrients, and less fat, than their farmed cousins.

There is a seemingly endless way to eat this incredibly healthy and environmentally sound alternative to farmed meat so I always look forward to the autumn when the season begins."

Thomasina Miers, Chef & Food Writer

The Wild Meat Company have been sourcing and selling wild game from their butchery in Suffolk for over 20 years. They were named as one of Rick Stein's Food Heroes, highly praised by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and featured in The Times' as one of the UK's best sustainable butchers.

Order all your game online for home delivery from www.wildmeat.co.uk

For more information about BCA-assured game and to discover recipes visit www.eatwild.co

