

# USING A MEAT THERMOMETER



## WHY USE A MEAT THERMOMETER?



A meat thermometer will help you cook beef at a safe temperature and prevent overcooking.

### RECOMMENDED INTERNAL TEMPERATURES

Ground beef (medium)	160°F
Beef roasts or steaks (medium rare)	145°F
Beef roasts or steaks (medium)	160°F

## SELECTING A MEAT THERMOMETER

Choose a thermometer that is designed for meat — not for candy or other foods. There are several types and styles of meat thermometers that vary in level of technology and price. The two most common types are described below.

TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Instant-Read 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides a quick reading via a dial or digital readout</li><li>• Provides accurate reading of meat at least 1/2 inch thick</li><li>• Ideal for steaks and burgers</li></ul>
Oven-Proof 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides accurate reading of temperature in meat at least 2 inches thick</li><li>• Inserted into meat prior to cooking; remains inserted during cooking</li><li>• Designed for use in conventional oven</li><li>• Ideal for roasts</li></ul>

## TIPS FOR PROPER USE

A meat thermometer must be inserted properly to **accurately determine temperature**. Depending on the thermometer, the sensor will be between 1/2 inch and 2 inches long. The sensor must be completely immersed in the deepest area of the meat.

- For ground beef, insert the thermometer into the thickest area; insert sideways in thin items such as burgers
- For beef roasts or steaks, insert the thermometer into the center of the thickest part of the meat, away from bone and fat

Most meat thermometers are **accurate** to within plus or minus 1 to 2°F. Always **check meat in several places** with a meat thermometer to ensure the temperature is **safe throughout**.

Do not leave cooked beef at room temperature for more than two hours.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### USDA MEAT AND POULTRY HOTLINE:

For food safety questions on topics including safe storage and handling of food, safe preparation, product dating, product content and more.

Open M-F, 10:00am – 4:00pm EST.  
PHONE: 888-MPHotline (888-674-6854)  
EMAIL: [mp hotline.fsis@usda.gov](mailto:mp hotline.fsis@usda.gov)  
ONLINE: [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food\\_Safety\\_Education/Thermy/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/Thermy/index.asp)



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