



***Cut the muscle groups across the grain of the meat for tender steaks and roasts.***

Pat each piece dry with a paper towel and wrap in waxed paper as tightly as possible. Try to purge as much air from the package as possible to prevent freezer burn. Label the wrapped meat with the type of cut and the date and place it in the freezer. When properly wrapped, the venison remains good for up to one year.



**Keeping The Natural State natural**

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# Processing **DEER**



**A**lthough many butchers will process deer at a very reasonable price, butchering your own deer is not difficult. The only tools you need are a sharp knife, a hacksaw or meat saw and a grinder.

### Age-old Question

Some people age their deer before butchering, but it is not necessary. If you want to age the meat, it should be kept in a cool area that does not get below 32 degrees or above 40 degrees. The deer should be skinned and wrapped in cheesecloth or a large sheet to prevent the meat from drying out.

Whether you age the meat or begin cutting immediately, remove any hair or clotted blood with a dry paper towel or sponge. Bloodshot meat around bullet or arrow wounds should be cut out and discarded. These contribute to the wild taste many people find unpleasant.

### Making the Cuts

Keep the meat as cool as possible while working with it. Cool meat holds its form better, and is easier to cut and grind.

The front shoulders and hindquarters can be removed easily by working the knife into the joint and cutting it free. The tenderloins (back straps) can be removed by making a cut straight down from the top of the back on each side of the backbone, running the length of the back and pulling the meat free in two strips about 2 feet long each.

Saw through the ribs where they meet up with the backbone and cut out the large muscles surrounding the neck as one large roast. Be careful not to cut through the backbone when making these cuts.

Separate the major muscles in each section according to the chart provided, removing as much of the silver skin (membrane between muscle groups) as possible.

Cut the muscle groups across the grain of the meat for tender steaks and roasts. Lengthwise cuts should be made only on meat that will be turned into jerky. Save all end pieces and shanks for grinding or stew meat.

### Wrap It Up

Steaks and ground meat should be wrapped in single-serving portions for faster thawing times. While many people mix beef fat with ground deer to add flavor, this is best added right before cooking, so the wild flavor does not transfer to the fat. Most people prefer mixing three parts venison to one part beef fat for cooking characteristics of ground beef.

### Butcher Chart

