

Proper field dressing and skinning are the keys to having a freezer full of top-quality venison.

Skinning

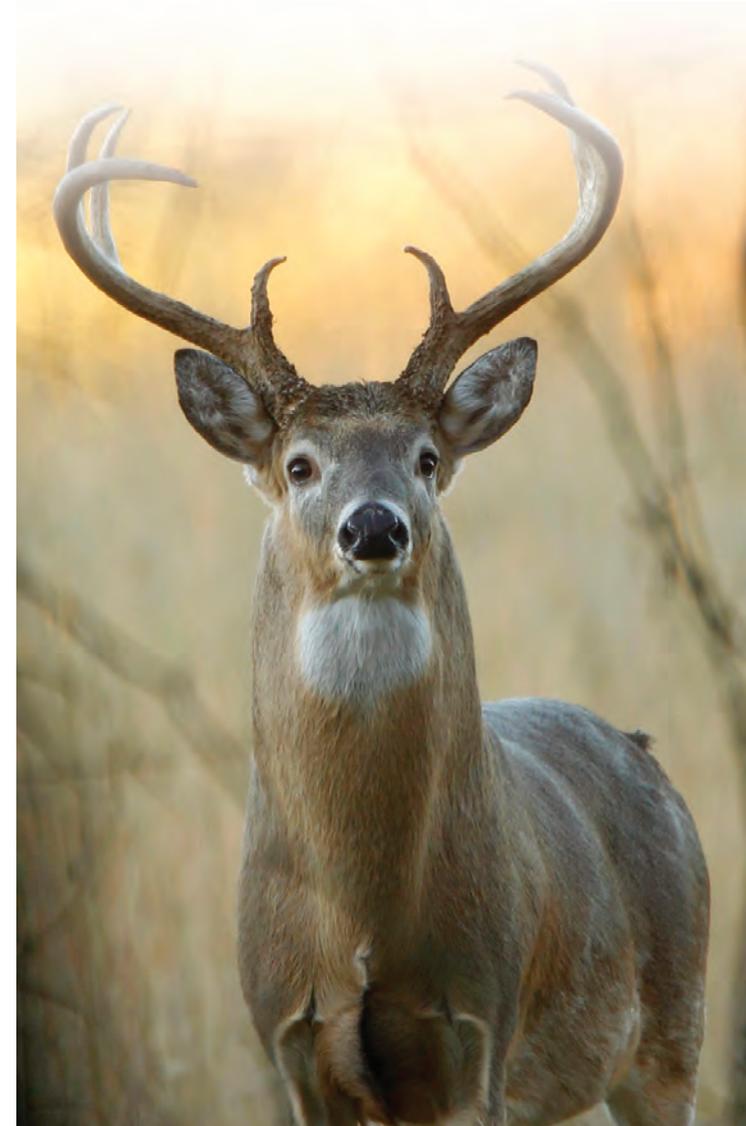
Skin your deer as soon as possible after checking it with a local check station. The sooner you skin it, the easier it will be and the better the meat will taste. You can hang the deer by the head or the legs. Make a shallow cut, just deep enough to work your fingers underneath the skin. Grip the skin firmly with both hands and pull down with steady pressure. Use the knife to separate the skin from the meat in stubborn areas. A hacksaw or bone saw can remove the legs at the knee and the head at the top of the neck quickly. Inspect the deer and remove any bloodshot areas.

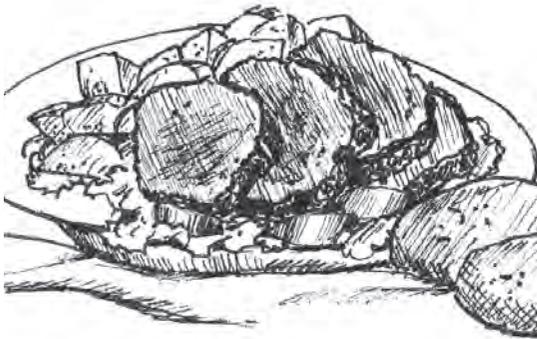


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Field Dressing and Skinning Deer





The most important part of preparing a deer for the table happens long before the seasonings ever reach the meat.

Proper field dressing and skinning are the keys to having a freezer full of top-quality venison. A good, sharp knife is essential for both field dressing and skinning. A fairly thin blade about 3 inches long gives plenty of cutting surface to work efficiently and is comfortable to handle on large skinning jobs. Latex or rubber gloves protect from viruses and bacteria and keep your hands clean.

clip point



drop point



Field Dressing

Before you make the first cut, approach the animal slowly and be sure it is dead. If the deer is dead, its eye won't blink when touched with a stick.

You should field dress your deer as soon as you confirm it is dead and place your tag on it. The longer its vital organs are inside, the more chance there is of meat contamination.

Begin by placing the deer, belly up, on an incline with the head above the body. Make

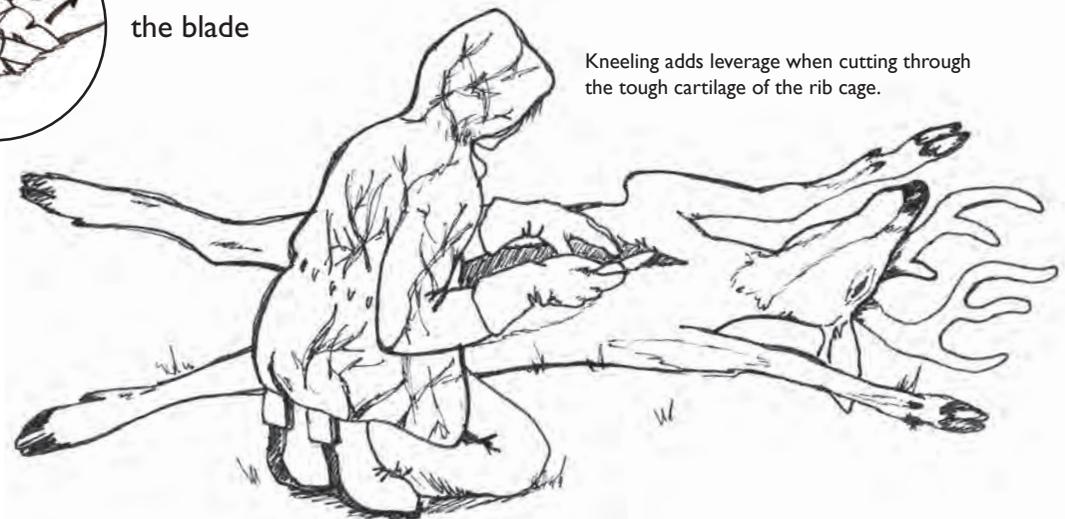


the first cut in the center of the chest, just below the rib cage. Cut down the belly to the anus with the blade

Make sure the blade is facing up. You may also place your free hand underneath the blade.

facing up; avoid nicking the stomach or intestines. Continue the cut up through the ribcage to the bottom of the jaw. If the deer is going to be mounted, stop this cut at the front legs. Reach as far up the throat as you can and sever the windpipe. All of the internal organs should come out with gentle pressure. Be especially careful removing the stomach, intestines and anus. Cut deeply into the base of the pelvic bone to remove these organs without tearing them.

If possible, wipe the cavity clean and prop it open with a stick or spreader to speed cooling. If you do nick an intestine, wash the area with clean water as soon as possible.



Kneeling adds leverage when cutting through the tough cartilage of the rib cage.