

free-raised

THE AUTHENTIC VEAL

Third-generation processors Randy and Tim Strauss say it's a simple concept, "Nature gives. We accept."

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Strauss Free-Raised Veal Chops
with Ratatouille and Herb Butter



Ask anyone to pick the most controversial item in the meat display and chances are they'll point to the veal chops. But that is likely to change. The same meat that inspires great recipes from chefs and outrage from animal rights activists is undergoing a renaissance.

I couldn't be happier about the changes. Years ago, when I owned a butcher shop, many of my specialty orders came from high-end restaurants with fancy veal dishes on their menus. I grew to love the meat's tender, subtle flavor and versatility. In fact, at least once a week I took veal home to my family for everyday meals.

But for many of us, veal lost its appeal as questions were raised about how veal-calves were treated on the farm. The worst scenarios involved formula-fed calves tethered and crated in tight quarters, unable to move about. This made a lot of people uncom-

fortable, including Randy and Tim Strauss, brothers who run a third-generation veal company based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Strauss brothers started researching and experimenting with how to improve the lives of veal-calves and still produce a top-quality product. What they discovered has begun to revolutionize the industry. The best formula, it turns out, is the one Mother Nature provided long ago.

Under the Strauss philosophy, from the moment calves are born they are "free-raised"—roaming fresh, green pastures beside their mothers while nursing and grazing on lush grass. By the time they are ready for market six months later they have reached 500 healthy pounds, all hormone- and antibiotic-free. The stress-free pasture life results in naturally tender veal and a pure, clean flavor. I think it's out of this world.

Since the calves depend upon green pastures, the Strauss brothers follow the growing season by enlisting family farmers and ranchers from Wisconsin to Louisiana who share their passion for raising animals in a humane and natural manner.

For many consumers there's another roadblock to eating veal. It scares people who think they need a fancy recipe. I hear the same question time and again, especially from the younger generation: "How do you prepare veal?"

The beauty of veal is that it tastes great simply sautéed with a little salt and pepper. That's a 10-minute meal! It also adapts to just about every seasoning and sauce to satisfy the creative cook. Try one of the easy recipes on the following page from Randy's wife Diane, who helped inspire the Strauss dream of humanely raised veal-calves.

Personally, I could eat Strauss veal five days a week. It fits in beautifully with the high-quality choices in Lunds and Byerly's meat departments, where great flavor goes hand-in-hand with natural products that meet the highest possible standards. It's easy to cook and tender with a pure flavor that wows me. And with half the fat of boneless, skinless chicken breasts, free-raised veal offers an extra-healthy choice. You'll love it! »





Strauss Free-Raised Veal Scaloppini
with Lemon and Spinach

Veal Scaloppini with Lemon and Spinach

SERVES 4

- 8 Strauss Free-Raised veal cutlets (4-5 ounces each), ¼-inch thick kosher or sea salt to taste cracked black pepper to taste all-purpose flour ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil, divided 4 tablespoons butter 2 whole garlic cloves, peeled 1½ cups thinly sliced shiitake or crimini mushrooms 1 cup grape or cherry tomatoes, halved ¼ cup dry white wine ¼ cup chicken broth or stock 1 whole fresh lemon, halved 1 pound fresh spinach 1 tablespoon fresh, chopped parsley

➔Place veal cutlets between two pieces of plastic wrap and pound well with smooth side of meat mallet or back side of small, heavy pan. Pound cutlets until ¼ inch thick.

➔Lightly season both sides of cutlets with salt and pepper, dredge in flour; shake off excess.

➔Heat a large, heavy stainless steel sauté pan or cast-iron pan over medium-high heat. Add half of the olive oil (¼ cup) to pan. When oil starts to smoke, add half of the cutlets and sauté on each side until lightly browned, about 1-2 minutes per side. Remove from pan; repeat with remaining cutlets. Reserve cutlets on warm plate. Discard oil from pan.

➔Add butter to same pan and sauté whole garlic cloves, sliced mushrooms, and halved tomatoes until tender. Season to taste with salt and pepper. If using salted butter you may not want to add additional salt.

➔Add dry white wine, chicken stock, and juice of half a lemon and cook over medium-high heat until liquid is reduced by half. Remove whole garlic cloves.

➔Add cleaned fresh spinach to pan and toss into mushroom sauté. Add veal cutlets on top of spinach; cover and reduce heat to low. Allow cutlets to warm through.

➔Squeeze remaining fresh lemon over top, sprinkle with fresh chopped parsley.

Veal Chops with Ratatouille and Herb Butter

SERVES 4

- 4 Strauss Free-Raised veal rib chops (12 ounces each) kosher or sea salt to taste cracked black pepper to taste ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Herb Butter

- ¼ pound unsalted butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons Italian parsley, chopped kosher or sea salt to taste
- 1 teaspoon chives, minced black pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon basil, chopped

➔Remove veal chops from refrigerator one hour before grilling. Season chops with salt and pepper and coat with olive oil. Marinate one hour while veal comes to room temperature.

➔Herb Butter: Place softened butter in bowl, add all ingredients and mix well. Set aside.

➔Preheat grill to medium-high heat. Place marinated chops on grill and cook for 6-8 minutes per side (internal temperature should be 140°F).

➔Serve with ratatouille as pictured (for ratatouille recipe, go to FreeRaised.com) or serve with sautéed fresh spinach and roasted baby red potatoes. ■

Go to FreeRaised.com for veal preparation tips, cooking videos, recipes, and more.

