

# Venison Schmeatloaf

By David Schmetterling | Preparation time: 10 minutes | Cooking time: 1 hour | Serves 8



**M**eatloaf is a great comfort food. It's delicious, filling, and easy to prepare and cook.

For these reasons, it's now a staple of my hunting camps, whether warmed up on a wall tent woodstove or cooked in my camper's oven. It's even become a good-luck meal the night before hunting trips. On top of all that, meatloaf is the dish that keeps on giving—providing several dinners or meatloaf-and-mashed-potato sandwiches with the leftovers.

Meatloaf, in all its varieties, is popular around the world. The Austrian version, *faschierter braten* (“minced roast”), is wrapped in ham before baking. In Italy, Turkey, Hungary, and many other countries, the dish is stuffed with hard-boiled eggs. The Vietnamese call their meatloaf *chả* and boil it rather than bake it.

I enjoy many versions. This particular one—which a friend has jokingly named after me—is great for all big game burger, and it's always a hit at hunting camp. The recipe has two parts: the meat mixture and the special filling that's in the center and on top (not shown in photo).

I can't guarantee that this dish will ensure good luck on your next hunting trip. But I promise that you and your hunting companions will eat well. ■

—David Schmetterling is the FWP Fisheries Research Program coordinator in Missoula.

## INGREDIENTS

### Meat mixture

- 2 lbs. deer, elk, or pronghorn burger
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 c. bread crumbs
- $\frac{2}{3}$  c. ketchup
- $\frac{1}{3}$  c. diced green onions

### Filling

- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$  c. olive oil
- $\frac{1}{3}$  c. bread crumbs
- $\frac{2}{3}$  c. shredded mozzarella cheese
- $\frac{2}{3}$  c. grated Parmesan cheese
- $\frac{1}{3}$  c. chopped basil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Ketchup

## DIRECTIONS

Heat oven to 350 degrees.

In a large bowl, combine the meat-mixture ingredients and stir together. Put half into a loaf pan, pressing down lightly to form an even, flat surface, and reserve the rest.

Mix filling ingredients in a medium bowl and pour half over the center of the meat layer in the pan, keeping it away from the edges. Put the remaining meat mixture on top and form a loaf with your hands. Cover the top with the rest of the filling and drizzle ketchup on top of that.

Bake for 1 hour, uncovered.

Let stand 15 minutes before serving.

Serve with mashed potatoes.

