

# Retail Meat Prices

---Monthly Variations in  
Oregon Markets



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Careful meat shopping pays big dividends. Red meats take about 25 cents of each dollar spent for food by the average American. Retail meat price charts in this circular will help you buy meat for daily use or for the freezer.

**EXTENSION CIRCULAR 702**

**APRIL 1962**

**Cooperative Extension Service**

**Oregon State University, Corvallis**

Cooperative Extension work in Agriculture and Home Economics, F. E. Price, director. Oregon State University and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. Printed and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914.

## BEEF

Oregon retail meat counters are stocked with a fairly even supply of beef throughout the year. Higher grades, which come from grain-fed cattle, are available year round. The beef supply is supplemented by lower grades, which come from grass-fed cattle, in the late summer and early fall.

Retail prices of beef cuts vary somewhat from month to month in Oregon. Take advantage of seasonally low prices and meat counter "specials" when buying retail cuts.

Chuck roast is higher in price from September through February. It is least expensive in retail markets during spring and summer. As shown in the retail price chart (opposite page), chuck roast is usually 3% lower in May than in January. It is usually 1% higher in October than in January. (January = 100 in all charts.)

Ground beef remains about the same price throughout the year. Frequently least expensive in February, prices rise slightly for the next 6 months.

Rib roast is most expensive from May through October. Purchase rib roasts for the freezer in the winter or early spring. Roasts can be kept for 9 to 12 months if frozen at 0° F. or lower.

Round steaks are least expensive in Oregon markets from December through April. They are most expensive in summer.

To be prepared for inexpensive outdoor meals, freeze a 6 to 8 months' supply of quick-cooking steaks in winter or early spring.

Depending on your family's preferences, it may be more economical to stock the freezer with certain retail cuts rather than a side or quarter of beef. Date the packages before freezing so maximum storage times, as listed below, won't be exceeded.

### **Freezer Tip**

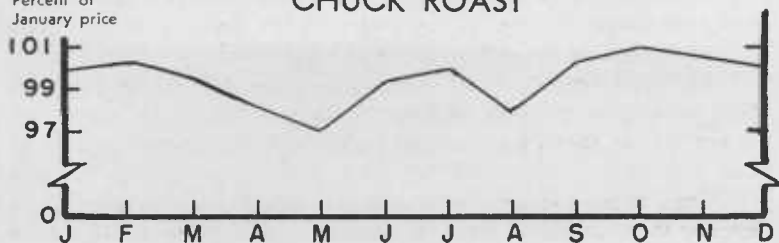
Beef, as well as other meats, needs to be properly wrapped before freezing. Careful packaging, which includes proper sealing, helps prevent rancidity and freezer-burn. Rancidity is caused by oxidation of fat. Freezer-burn is caused by moisture loss. A good quality wrapping material is moisture-vapor resistant; and is clean, durable, and pliable at low temperatures.

#### Maximum Storage Times for Frozen Beef at 0° F.

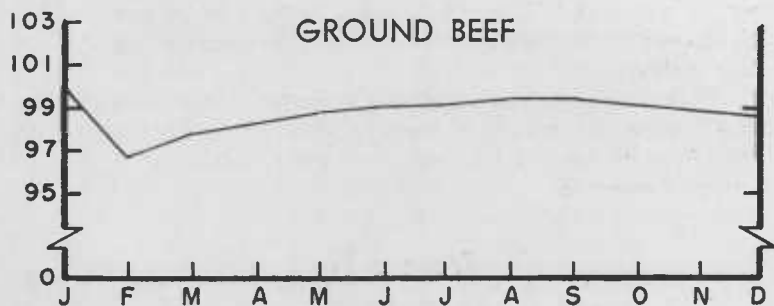
Beef, fresh .....	9-12 months
Beef, ground .....	4- 6 months
Heart .....	2- 4 months
Liver .....	3- 4 months
Roasts, cooked .....	4- 6 months

Percent of  
January price

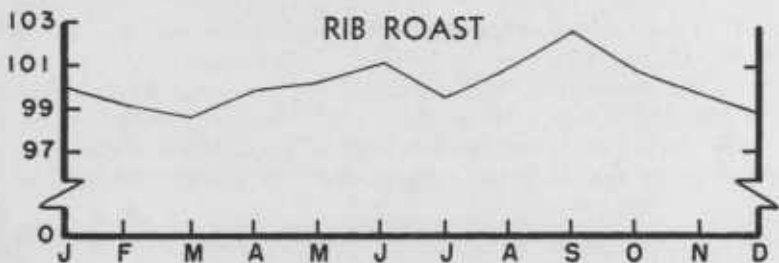
## CHUCK ROAST



## GROUND BEEF



## RIB ROAST



## ROUND STEAK



## PORK

More pork is available in Oregon retail markets during fall and winter than during spring and summer. Retail prices of pork vary considerably more than those of beef.

Bacon is usually least expensive from November through May. It reaches its peak in price in late summer and early fall. Do not freeze sliced bacon. Slab bacon may be frozen for a short time.

Cook-before-eating ham is most reasonable in price from October through April. Ham is usually highest in price from June through September. Families who enjoy ham during the summer should stock a 3 months' supply in the freezer before June. Salt speeds up development of rancidity so storage life of cured meat is short.

Pork chops are least expensive from November through May. Stock a 6 months' supply of fresh pork before May for most economy. As with ham, pork chops are most expensive from June through September.

### **Freezer Tip**

Pork, as well as other meats, should be kept in a freezer that maintains a temperature of 0° F. or less. Foods will not keep at their best when temperatures fluctuate above zero (i.e. 0° up to 5°, 10°, or 15°, then back to 0° F.). The higher the temperature rises above zero, the faster foods deteriorate in flavor, color, texture, and nutritive value. Only a thermometer will guide you, since a package of meat remains hard at temperatures above zero. Frost inside the package indicates that the storage temperature has fluctuated.

Meat and poultry that have thawed may be refrozen if the temperature of the thawed product has not reached 50° F. Quality will be impaired but the food will be safe to eat.

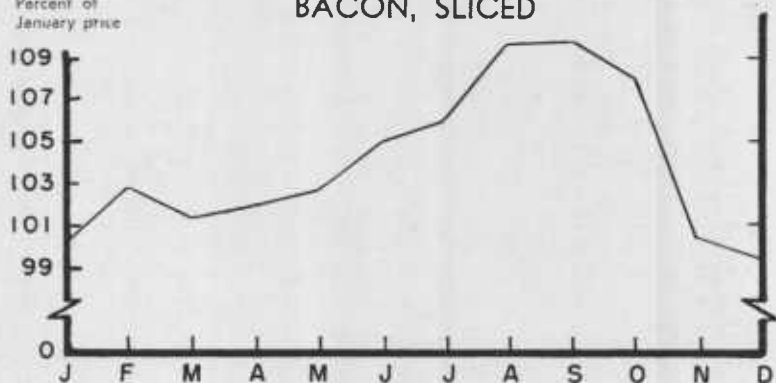
Keep meats frozen at 0° F. or lower.

#### Maximum Storage Times for Frozen Pork at 0° F.

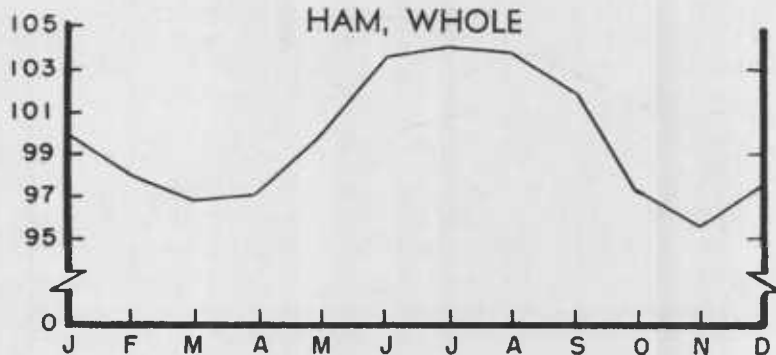
Bacon, slab .....	1-3 months
Bacon, sliced .....	Do not freeze
Ham, whole .....	1-3 months
Liver .....	1-2 months
Pork, fresh .....	6-9 months
Roasts, cooked .....	1-3 months
Sausage .....	1-3 months

Percent of  
January price

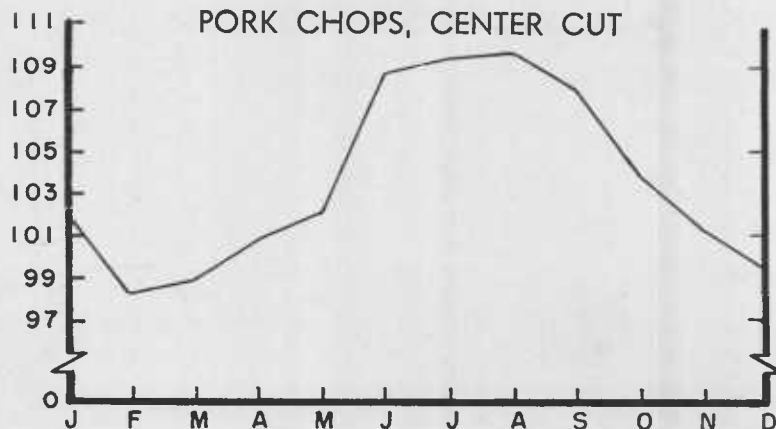
### BACON, SLICED



### HAM, WHOLE

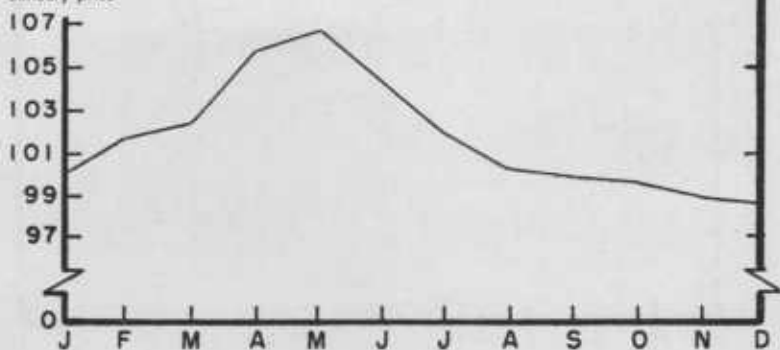


### PORK CHOPS, CENTER CUT

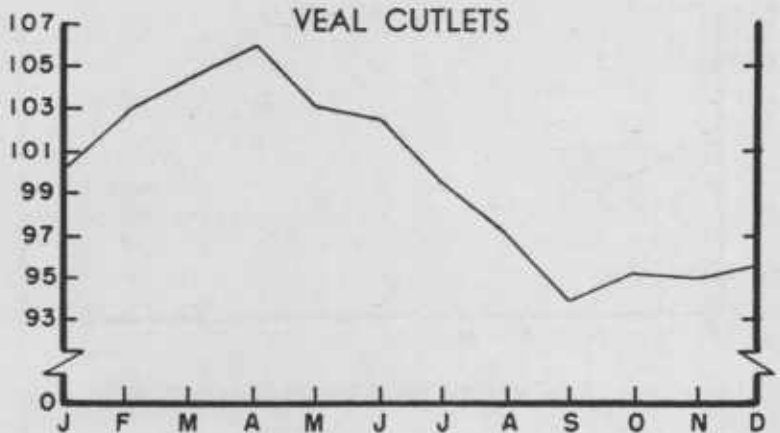


Percent of  
January price

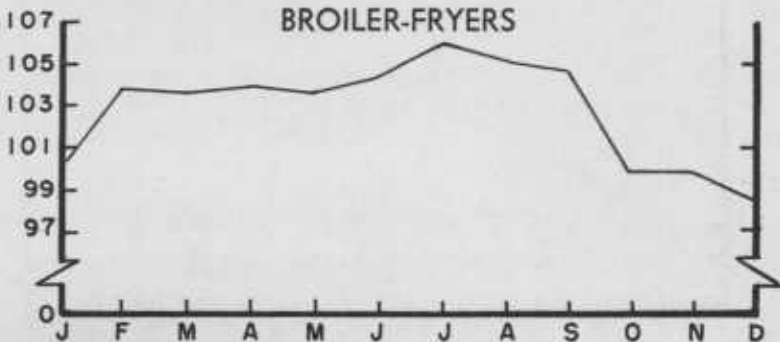
### LEG OF LAMB



### VEAL CUTLETS



### BROILER-FRYERS



## LAMB

Leg of lamb is least expensive in Oregon markets from August through January. Fall or winter is a good time to put lamb in the freezer. Prices of lamb are highest in spring.

## VEAL

Veal cutlets are least expensive the last half of the year, reaching a low point in September. If you want to enjoy veal in the winter and spring plan to stock a 6 months' supply in the freezer before January.

## BROILER-FRYERS

Broiler-fryers are least expensive in fall and early winter. Packages of poultry, as well as other meats, as commonly purchased in retail stores are not suitably wrapped for freezing. Be sure to rewrap in a recommended freezer wrapping material. If giblets are to be frozen, package separately as they may impart a flavor to the rest of the poultry. To save money buy whole, ready-to-cook birds rather than cut-up ones. Poultry meat sometimes darkens when frozen. This is apparently due to an insufficiently low freezing temperature. To prevent darkening, freeze chickens at  $-10^{\circ}$  F. and turkeys at  $-20^{\circ}$  F. or lower. Do not stuff poultry before freezing it.

### Maximum Storage Times for Frozen Lamb, Veal, and Poultry at $0^{\circ}$ F.

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Lamb, fresh .....	9-12 months
Liver .....	3- 4 months
Veal, fresh .....	4- 6 months
Chicken, ready-to-cook .....	6- 7 months
Giblets .....	2- 3 months
Turkey, ready-to-cook .....	4- 5 months

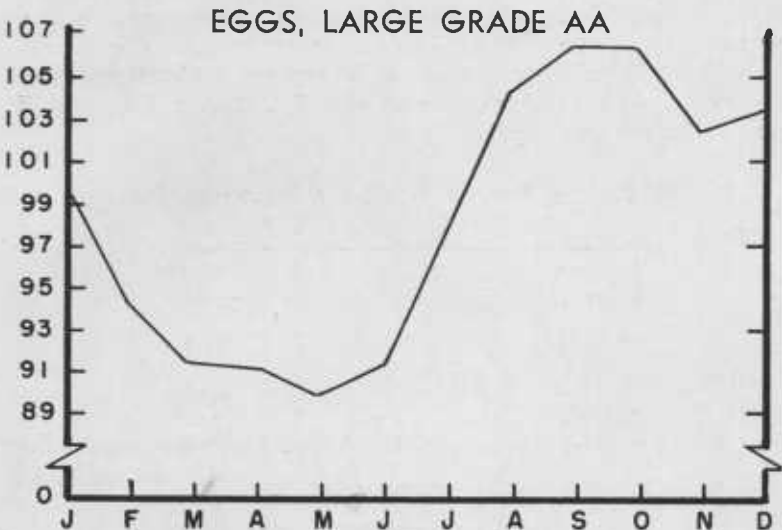
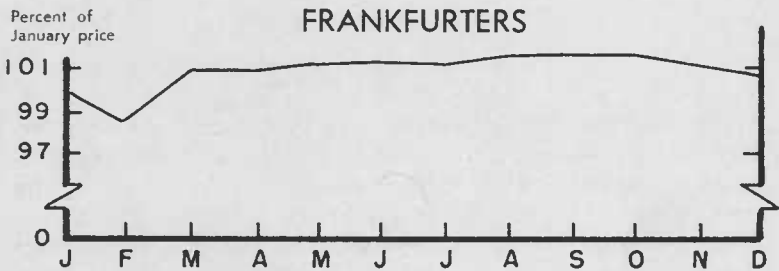
## FRANKFURTERS

Frankfurters and other processed meats, such as canned luncheon meat, vary little in price during the year in Oregon food markets.

## EGGS

Large-size eggs vary considerably in price during the year in Oregon retail markets. Large eggs, most plentiful and least expensive during the first half of the year, are most expensive the last half. To save money, buy small-size eggs in the late summer and medium-size eggs in the fall.

Use this egg buying guide: Small eggs are a better buy when they are more than 15 cents below the price of large eggs. Likewise, medium eggs are a better buy when they are more than 7 or 8 cents below the price of large eggs.



Source: Oregon prices were obtained from the U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Retail Food Prices by Cities," 1952-61.