

Mountain Beef and Sausage Meat Loaf

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A good homemade meatloaf should be in every cook's repertoire. Keeping our freezer stocked with Mountain Beef has prompted us to seek out sustainably raised pork from a local farm. (We buy from Nash Huber <http://www.nashsorganicproduce.com/>), and when we combine lean Mountain beef with the fatty sausage made from Nash's pigs, the results are amazing. While many cooks prefer the uniform results achieved by confining the loaf to a loaf pan, we like the rustic, "artisanal" look of a freeform loaf baked on a flat surface; more surface area is exposed to the dry heat of the oven where it caramelizes to delectable effect. The loaf may be baked with bacon strips on top, or it can be finished with a glaze of ketchup.

(Serves 8)

1 pound ground beef
1 pound bulk pork sausage 1 tablespoon canola or olive oil
1 medium onion, peeled and roughly chopped
2 eggs
1 cup panko, or fresh white breadcrumbs
1/4 cup water
1/4 cup ketchup, plus another 1/4 cup for glaze, optional
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
4 strips bacon, cut in half, optional

- 1.) Preheat the oven to 375 and oil a baking sheet with raised 1/2-inch sides or, if you prefer a more uniform loaf, oil a 2-quart ceramic or glass loaf pan. Put the ground beef and the pork sausage in a large mixing bowl.
- 2.) Put the onion in the food processor and process, pulsing the motor on and off until the onion is virtually puréed. Add the eggs, breadcrumbs, water, ketchup, salt, pepper, thyme and nutmeg and pulse the motor on and off a few times to incorporate all the ingredients.
- 3.) Pour the mixture from the food processor into the mixing bowl with the ground beef and pork and with a wooden spoon or clean hands, work the mixture until all the ingredients are thoroughly combined.
- 4.) Shape the mixture into an elongated ball or oval shape and place it on the oiled baking sheet or press it into the loaf pan. If desired, lay half strips of bacon over the loaf.
- 5.) Bake for 50 minutes and if you are not using bacon, brush on the ketchup. Bake another 10 minutes, or until a thermometer inserted in the middle of the loaf reads 160.