

personally agree with this philosophy. When the conditions are right I like to hang my game meat a minimum of ten days, up to a 14 days. In order to do so, however, the temperature and weather conditions must be right. The ultimate hanging temperature is from 30-50°F, and whenever possible, you should avoid hanging the carcass in direct sunshine. I usually hang mine in the garage where it is cool and no sun and less flies. I cover mine with a sheet to keep flies off and hold in the cold.

I can't emphasize enough how important it is to be diligent in the removal of absolutely every bit of blood from the wound of the bullet or bullets. The removal of this objectionable material is absolutely imperative if you are going to have good quality, untainted, flavorful meat. Unlike domestic raised animals, the blood shot from the bullet wounds of game animals is most often very strong tasting and unpalatable. Unlike butchering a pig, if it is not removed during the cutting/wrapping process the strong, rancid characteristic of this matter will impregnate the meat, making it equally undesirable. To a lesser extent, if the bones aren't removed they can also transfer strong flavor to the meat. For this reason, I generally bone out all of my meat. It makes the meat taste better and at the same time it saves on freezer space.

Another area that you must be vigilant in is the removal of any blood-shot damage due to the impact of the bullet. All this material must be cut out and discarded, as well as the dried crust, or layer, that forms on the outside of the carcass. I cut the hardened part of the outside into thin pieces and dry it for jerky for my dogs they love it don't waste any part of the animal's meat.

In order to reduce the possibility of freezer burn, it is best to leave your meat in chunks rather than cutting it into individual steaks at this time. These chunks can easily be sliced later as you prepare to cook them.

A basic rule in butchering is to always make your cuts across the natural grain of the meat, otherwise, the meat will be tough. Unfortunately, this is not always possible or practical, particularly in the area of the front shoulders and along the brisket. For this type of meat, you might want to employ some form of meat tenderizing. Butchers often use electric powered tenderizing units, but if you are like me and don't want to invest any more money in your butchering tools than is necessary, you might want to use a simple hand tenderizer to pound the meat. These do a great job for a lot less money.

Recently, vacuum packing units have become very popular. These are great to ensure airtight packaging, but while they work extremely well, they are also quite expensive to purchase and the bag material is equally costly. As an alternative, some people wrap their meat in two layers of butcher paper, but two layers of paper doesn't really seal the meat up as well as first putting it into a freezer bag followed by a single layer of butcher paper.