

## Spice

**continued from page 7**  
 ·1/4 teaspoon ground turmeric  
 ·1/4 teaspoon cumin seeds, finely ground  
 ·1/2 cup or more canola oil  
 ·1 cup rava, semolina or cream of wheat (not the quick-cooking kind) (see note)

Ask your butcher to slice the meat into 1/2-inch thick slices. When you get home, lay the slices between sheets of plastic wrap and pound with a mallet until each slice is about 1/8-inch thick. These slices are huge, so you can cut each pounded scaloppine widthwise into 2 pieces. You will end up with 10 to 12 slices.

Using a food processor or blender, grind the cilantro, chiles, lemon juice, water, ginger, garlic, salt, turmeric, and cumin to a smooth, fine paste. Taste for seasoning and adjust the lemon juice and salt as

needed; the masala should taste slightly tart as well as salty. Smear the masala over the meat, turning and restacking each piece to ensure that all the slices are evenly covered. Set aside to marinate for 30 minutes or up to 12 hours in the refrigerator.

Heat the oil in a large, heavy skillet. Place the rava in a large bowl or plate. Remove any big gobs of marinade from the scaloppine but don't scrape all the marinade off; you want as much of it to stay on as possible. Dip each scaloppine in the rava and dust well on both sides. Pan-fry in batches until crisp and browned, 3 to 4 minutes on each side. Do not overcrowd the pan. Remove to a paper-towel lined plate. Serve immediately.

**Note:** Rava, also called sooji, is Indian cream of wheat. It is available as both fine and coarse flours. You may use either.

## Buying, storing and cooking ground beef

### Ground Beef Label

You may see packages labeled as ground chuck, ground sirloin or ground round, but more commonly the label will indicate the percentage of lean to fat. 95% lean/5% fat ground beef qualifies as lean, one of the 29 cuts of lean beef. 70% lean/30% fat is the minimum amount of lean to meet the definition for ground beef. Although all types of ground beef are versatile and nutrient-rich, the easiest way to minimize fat in recipes is to start with at least a 90% lean/10% fat ratio.

### What to Look For

Select beef with a bright cherry-red color. Choose beef that is firm to the touch. Make sure the package is cold with no holes or tears. Choose packages without excessive liquid. Purchase beef before the sell-by date.

### At-Home Storage

Refrigerate or freeze as soon as possible after purchase. Label each package with the date and weight. Store ground beef in the refrigerator (35°-40°F) for 1 to 2 days or the freezer (0°F or below) for 3 to 4 months. Freeze beef in its

original transparent wrap up to two weeks. For longer storage, wrap in heavy-duty aluminum foil or place in plastic freezer bags, removing the air.

Cooked ground beef can be stored in the refrigerator 3 to 4 days or in the freezer for 2 to 3 months.

### Cooking

Use a gentle touch. Over mixing ground beef will result in burgers, meatloaves or meatballs with a firm, compact texture. Turn ground beef patties with a spatula. Do not press. Pressing causes the loss of juices and results in a dry burger.

Recipe cooking times are for fresh or thoroughly thawed ground beef. Ground beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160° F. Color is not a reliable indicator of ground beef doneness. Due to the natural nitrate content of ingredients often used in meatloaf, such as onions, celery and bell peppers; meatloaf may remain pink even when a 160° F internal temperature has been reached.

Insert an instant-read thermometer into the center or thickest part of the meatloaf or meatball, or horizontally from the side into the center for patties.

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