

# All Grass-Fed Beef Not Equal

by Ramona Huff

**W**hen Collins and I started Gryffon's Aerie ten years ago we wanted to elevate the standard of grass-fed beef. Typically it had the reputation of being inconsistent and lean to a fault. Consequently we chose a heritage breed, Red Devon, that has a significantly smaller frame enabling them to mature more quickly thus marble on grass unlike larger commercial breeds that have to spend more time growing into their frames and then be fattened on grain. Originally many grass-fed growers touted their leanness, this was before research proved that the fat from grass-fed animals is the "good fat." Today the real challenge is to finish the animal on grass solely while producing a well marbled, quality and consistent product. At Gryffon's Aerie this has



Ramona Huff

always been our goal and one that chefs all around the country will attest to.

Our beef has nice marbling—the good fat—and can stand an aggressive sear to seal in the juices but does not benefit from overcooking. It is not as temperamental nor dependent on "low and slow" as some cuts of other beef. I was a die hard "well done" gal until we started raising our own beef and Collins took over the cooking of it. Slowly I began to eat it a little more on the rare side. I had my beef eating epiphany last summer when a friend of ours made carpaccio with fresh tarragon. I would never have thought I could eat beef completely raw – it was sumptuous. When making burgers at home you are not under the watchful eye of our bureaucratic advisors—

Collins now serves our burgers rare in the middle—delicious. However, I do not recommend eating rare meat from store bought commercial beef, whose origins are unknown.

Grass-fed beef should be dry aged, this process allows the meat to tenderize releasing natural enzymes and softening the connective tissue. At the same time, moisture evaporates concentrating the flavor, creating a richer, beefy taste. Our beef is dry-aged for a minimum of 24 days, significantly longer than most other producers, to create the most flavorful beef possible. Here are several recipes that are perfect for the grill and won't break your budget. 🐔

*Ramona Huff is a local farmer and food enthusiast, along with her husband, Collins and their two children, CR and Catherine, they raise the heritage livestock and artisan meats of Gryffon's Aerie.*

**Pick Your Own Peaches**

**CHILES PEACH ORCHARD**

Farm Market  
Ice Cream Parlor  
Mon.-Sat. 9-6  
Sunday 10-5  
Crozet, VA 434-823-1583  
Jarman Gap Road (Rt. 691)  
between Greenwood & Crozet  
[ChilesPeachOrchard.com](http://ChilesPeachOrchard.com)

**Pick Your Own Fun!**

**Pick Your Own Peaches**

**CARTER MOUNTAIN ORCHARD**

Country Store  
Bakery  
Open daily 9-6  
434-977-1833  
Charlottesville, VA  
Located on Rt. 53 next to  
Monticello and Michie Tavern  
[CarterMountainOrchard.com](http://CarterMountainOrchard.com)

## Orange-ginger Marinade For London Broil

- 1 - 2inch piece of fresh ginger, cut into 4 chunks
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 large orange
- 1 tablespoon of Asian sesame oil
- ¼ cup of soy sauce
- 1 - 2 to 3 pound London broil

Process ginger, garlic and 3 inch of orange peel. Juice the orange and add the juice to the mixture along with the sesame oil and soy sauce. Pulse once or twice to blend. Place the meat in a zipper lock bag and add marinade; close and refrigerate overnight or 2 hours at room temperature. Turn the meat from time to time to allow the marinade to penetrate evenly. Let the meat come to room temperature before cooking if refrigerated.

Remove the meat from the marinade and pat dry. Sear the meat on hot grill for 2 to 3 minutes on each side then move it to an area of the grill with indirect heat and let it cook for 15 to 20 minutes. When the internal temperature registers 120 degrees for rare to medium rare take it off. Let the meat rest for 5 to 15 minutes loosely covered with foil. Cut across the grain in thin slices.

## Kebabs In Cranberry-onion Marinade

- 1 medium onion coarsely chopped
- 1 teaspoon of dried marjoram or oregano
- 1 teaspoon of freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup of cranberry or pomegranate juice
- 2 onions cut into 1-inch chunks
- 2 pounds of kebab beef or lamb
- 1 green bell pepper, cut into 1½-inch squares
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into 1½-inch squares
- 3 cloves of garlic, peeled
- 2 teaspoons of salt
- 2 teaspoons of olive oil

Blend the onion, garlic, marjoram or oregano, salt and pepper to a coarse paste in a food processor. Pour in the cranberry or pomegranate juice and oil; pulse once or twice to mix. Place the meat in a zipper-lock bag and cover with the marinade. Seal the bag marinate for 2 to 3 hours at room temperature or overnight in the refrigerator. Turn the meat from time to time (or prepare your favorite marinade or dry rub and marinate the meat as described in the recipe). Allow meat to come to room temperature before grilling. Tread the meat onto skewers, alternating with pieces of onion and pepper in any order you wish. When the coals are medium-hot put the skewers directly over the heat. Grill them for 4-5 minutes for medium-rare. Make sure not to burn the meat-if there are any flare-ups, cover the grill or move the skewers to a cooler part of the fire.