



RED MEAT | Meal time a guide to consumer confidence

Beef is back as family staple

KAREN COLLIER
 MELBOURNE

BEEF is back on the family dinner menu as economic confidence gathers steam.

The staple is again in favour after a sales slump at the height of the global financial crisis, the latest figures on the nation's eating habits reveal.

Meat industry experts say they regard beef as a barometer for people's appetite to spend.

Aussies chewed through 54 million serves of beef a week during July and August – up from 47 million serves a week when households were trimming fat from their budget towards the end of 2008.

Casserole cuts have led the charge as a slow-cooking craze simmers in pots across the country.

Some amateur chefs, inspired by their favourite restaurants to experiment with different recipes, are even sampling unorthodox ox tail and tripe.

Buoyed by the trend, the meat industry is on the verge of launching a major campaign to convince people to sink their teeth into prime steak over summer.

Market research company Roy Morgan's latest consumer data suggests beef sales suffered most when consumers became jittery and started shunning expensive meat cuts.

In comparison, lamb, pork and chicken consumption was largely unaffected.

"It took an initial hit as many people tried to save money, but



has steadily gained ground," Meat and Livestock Australia spokesman Andrew Cox said.

Mr Cox said beef was considered a staple, whereas lamb tended to be an unplanned buy that households had continued to eat as a treat during economic uncertainty.

Butcher Brendon Watts said his sales of slow cooker comfort food cuts, such as osso bucco, gravy beef and chuck steak, had surged almost 20 per cent this year.

The national research revealed Aussies ate almost eight million serves a week of casserole cuts, diced beef and beef strips in July and August.



MOROCCAN STYLE KEBABS WITH LEMON COUSCOUS

1 kg goat meat (rump)
 2 tbsp olive oil
 2 tbsp lemon juice
 1 tbsp harissa paste
 1 tspn ground coriander
 1 red capsicum, cut in 2cm squares
 1 green capsicum, cut in 2cm squares

LEMON COUSCOUS
 2 leeks, thinly sliced
 1 tbsp olive oil
 4 tbsp soft butter
 3 cups veg. stock
 1 tspn salt
 375g pkt instant couscous
 Grated rind of 1 lemon
 2 tbsp shredded mint

METHOD:
 Cut meat into even-sized cubes, combine with oil, lemon juice, harissa and coriander, mix well.
 Thread meat and capsicum alternatively onto metal skewers. Brush each skewer lightly with oil.
 Preheat the chargrill pan to hot before adding the meat.
 Cook for 2-3 minutes on each side.
 Rest skewers for 3 minutes before serving with lemon couscous.

To make lemon couscous:
 Cook leeks in the oil and 2 tbsp of the butter until soft.
 Place to one side.
 Bring stock to the boil with salt and pour over couscous.
 Stand for 10 minutes until

couscous has absorbed stock. Fluff couscous with a fork, add the remaining butter. Stir through cooked leeks, lemon rind and mint.

Source: Meat and Livestock Australia

ADVENTUROUS COOKS: Butcher Frank Tenace says more people are giving different cuts of meat, such as goat, a go