

Steak Tartare

Description

Steak tartare, also known as filet Américain and Américain préparé, is a dish typically made of freshly minced beef mixed with various condiments, and served raw. Steak tartare is popular in European countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland and France. Locally, steak tartare is served as an appetizer or entrée at some restaurants. A small number of food service establishments in Ontario also serve tartare made from horse meat.

Similar dishes

- Kibbe(h) nayye: A Lebanese dish consisting of freshly minced lamb or beef, mixed with bulgur wheat, spices, olive oil, green onions, and herbs such as mint and basil. It is served raw and typically eaten with pita bread.
- Kitfo: An Ethiopian dish consisting of freshly minced lean beef, mixed with mitmita (a blend of red chili powder and spices) and niter kibbeh (clarified butter infused with herbs and spices). It is typically served with injera (a traditional type of flatbread) and ayib (Ethiopian cottage cheese).
- Yukhoe (or yuk hwaee): A Korean dish consisting of raw beef cut into thin matchsticks or minced, mixed with green onions, Asian pear, soy sauce, sesame oil, garlic, pine nuts, and sesame seeds, and then topped with a raw egg yolk.



Steak tartare

How steak tartare is prepared

Steak tartare is typically made with lean cuts of beef, such as tenderloin or sirloin, which is finely chopped by hand or ground with a meat grinder. The freshly minced steak is mixed with various ingredients such as egg yolks, mayonnaise, onions, capers, cornichons, parsley, ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, hot pepper sauce, and/or Dijon mustard. After mixing, the steak tartare is served with thin slices of toasted bread or fries.



Steak tartare spread on a crostini

Potential food safety risks

- Raw beef can become contaminated with pathogens during slaughter. According to the 2009 *Food Code* published by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), hazards in raw beef products such as steak tartare include *Salmonella* spp. and *Escherichia coli* O157:H7.
- Steak tartare is often prepared with raw egg yolk. Eggs can be contaminated with *Salmonella* serotype Enteritidis through transovarian transmission, and are a major source of *S. Enteritidis* infection in humans. According to Health Canada, foods containing raw eggs may be harmful to vulnerable people such as young children, the elderly, pregnant women and people with weak immune systems.
- *Listeria monocytogenes* may also be present in raw beef. In a study examining the occurrence of pathogens in raw and ready-to-eat meat products offered for sale in supermarkets in Edmonton, Alberta, *L. monocytogenes* was found in 52% of 100 raw ground beef samples collected (Bohaychuk *et al.*, 2006).

Associated outbreaks

- Between December 2008 and January 2009, 20 cases of Shiga toxin producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) O157 were associated with the consumption of contaminated steak tartare in the Netherlands (Greenland *et al.*, 2009).
- Between December 22, 1994 and January 4, 1995, 107 confirmed and 51 probable cases of *Salmonella* Typhimurium gastrointestinal illness in Wisconsin were associated with the consumption of raw ground beef (Frazak *et al.*, 1995).
- Between August and October 1985, two outbreaks of trichinosis in France were associated with the consumption of raw or lightly cooked horsemeat (Ancelle *et al.*, 1986).

Food safety legislation

Steak tartare is not specifically addressed in Regulation 562 (Food Premises) made under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. However, the Regulation does specify minimum internal temperatures for cooking ground meat and food mixtures containing a hazardous food:

- Subsection 33(7), paragraph 3 states that all parts of ground meat (other than ground meat that contains poultry) must be cooked to reach an internal temperature of at least 71°C for at least 15 seconds.
- For a food mixture containing poultry, egg, meat, fish or another hazardous food, subsection 33(5) states that all parts of the mixture must be cooked to reach a temperature of at least 74°C for at least 15 seconds.

Safe food handling of steak tartare

- Food safety guidelines for raw meat dishes such as steak tartare are contained in the 2009 FDA *Food Code*:
 - Subparagraph 3-401.11(D)(2) states that undercooked ground meat should not be offered for sale on a children's menu.
 - Subparagraph 3-603.11(A) states that food establishments that sell or serve an animal food such as beef or eggs "raw, undercooked, or without otherwise being processed to eliminate pathogens" in a ready-to-eat form or as an ingredient in another ready-to-eat food, should inform consumers of the significantly increased risk of consuming such foods by way of a prescribed disclosure and reminder.
 - Subparagraph 3-801.11(C)(2) states that partially cooked animal food such as rare meat should not be offered for sale or service in food establishments that serve a highly susceptible population.
- Richard Vergili, senior sanitation instructor at the Culinary Institute of America, advises against the use of pre-ground meat for steak tartare, and recommends that the meat should be ground or chopped as close to service as possible (Parseghian, 1993).
- Applying a brief surface heat treatment to the meat before grinding or chopping may reduce the risk of microbial infection without ruining the dish (Ethelberg *et al.*, 2007).
- Health Canada recommends that pasteurized eggs or egg products be used in the preparation of foods that call for raw or undercooked eggs in the final product.

Who should avoid eating steak tartare

Health Canada recommends that people with weakened immune systems, older adults, and pregnant women avoid the consumption of raw meat products such as steak tartare.