

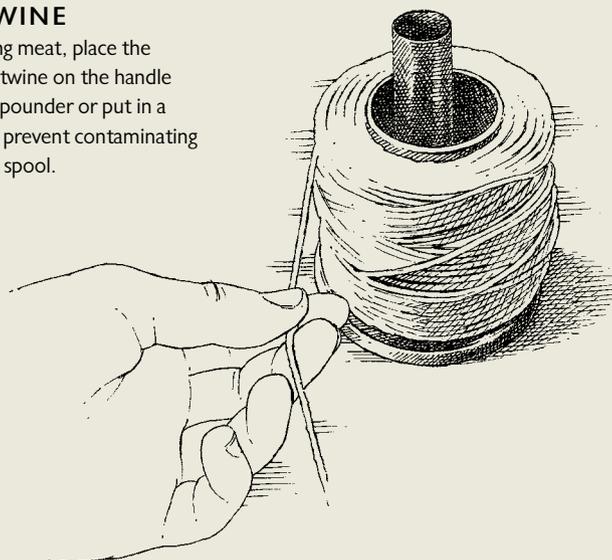
How to Tie Meat

Many cuts of meat, such as leg of lamb, are unevenly shaped by nature. As a result, they cook more evenly if molded and then tied into shape. Stuffed, butterflied cuts also need tying to hold their shape. In the process of testing and retesting to determine the best ways to tie various cuts of meat, we found a few less obvious perks: Tying makes a piece of meat easier to handle, helps to hold in juices, and lends to better presentation.

By Maryellen Driscoll

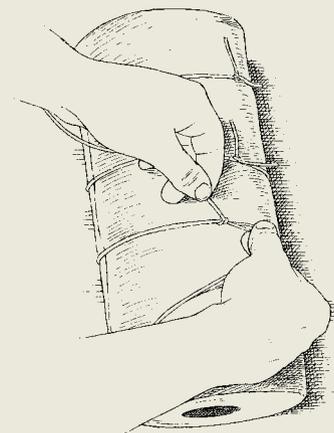
THE TWINE

When tying meat, place the butcher's twine on the handle of a meat pounder or put in a drawer to prevent contaminating the entire spool.



LEARNING THE ROPES

To practice tying the knot, use a roll of paper towel.



TYING A BASIC KNOT

There's no such thing as a standard butcher's knot, but this one is simpler than most, allows you to adjust tension, and holds snug.

1. Draw the end of the string, known as the bitter, away from you so that it passes under the meat, then draw it back over the top.
2. Cross the bitter under the left side of the bottom strand. With your left hand, pinch the point where the strings intersect. Cross the bitter up and over the right side of the top strand, leaving a large keyhole opening.
3. Pull the bitter under and through the keyhole. Tug the bitter down, closing the knot.
4. Pull the strings away from each other to tighten the knot. Secure with a final basic knot, making sure it is snug but not too tight or the meat fibers will tear and the juices will spill. Trim knot ends with scissors.
5. Space the ties evenly, about three fingers apart.

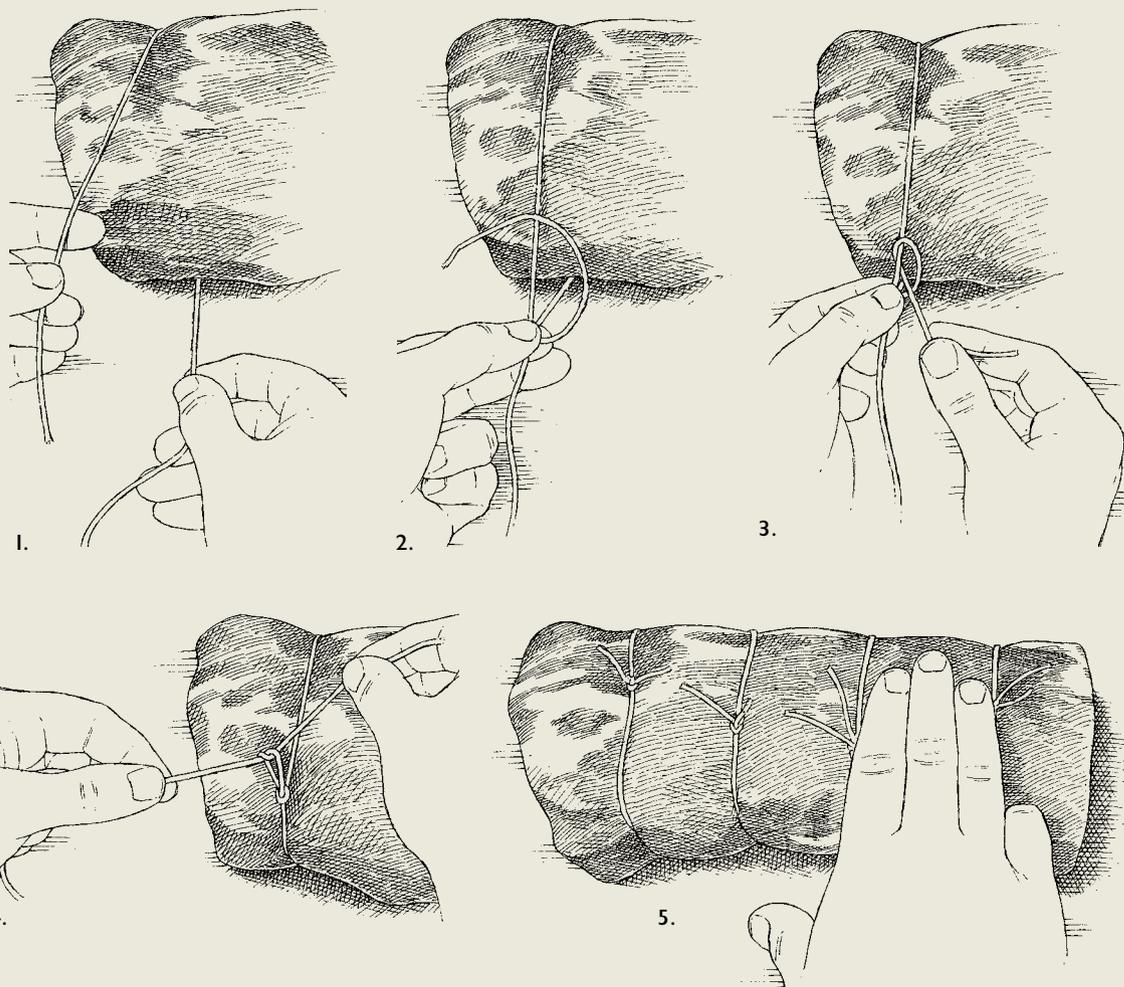
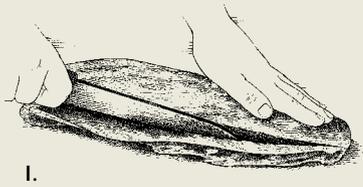
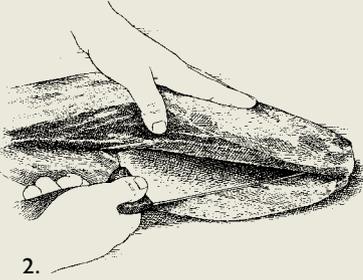


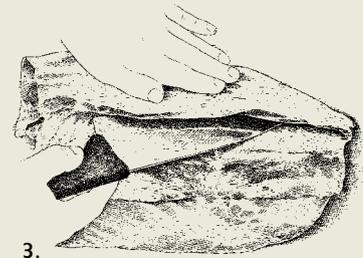
Illustration: John Burgoyne



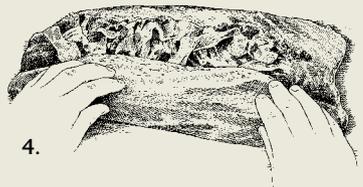
1.



2.



3.



4.

BUTTERFLIED MEATS

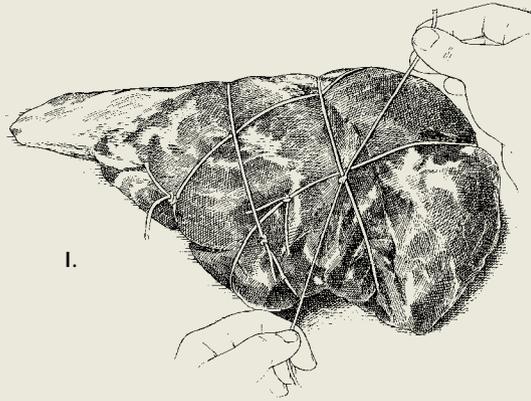
Butterflied and stuffed meats need tying. We like this butterflying method for beef tenderloin used in "Chez Panisse Cooking" (Random House, 1988), because it adds 25 percent more length to the meat roll than if it were simply butterflied across the center width.

1. Positioning your knife about $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the edge, make a lengthwise cut two-thirds of the way down. Fold back the cut edge.

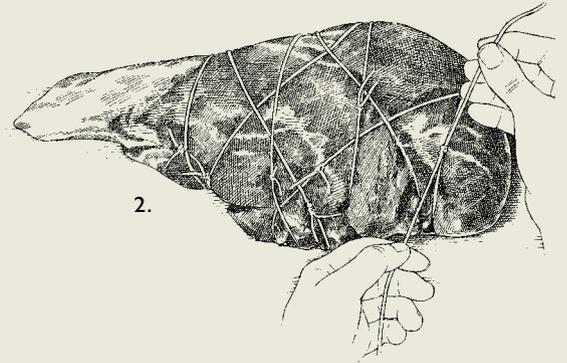
2. Slice horizontally until you are about $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the other edge. Fold the flap open like a book.

3. Slice the flap horizontally until you are about $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the other edge. Fold the flap open like a book.

4. After spreading filling on the opened meat, roll and tie, following steps 1–5 opposite page.



1.



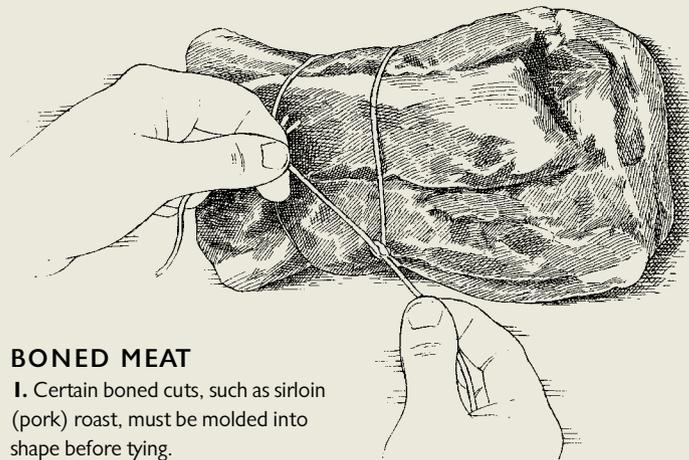
2.

LEG OF LAMB

Tying is imperative to hold together the multiple small muscles on a semi-boned leg of lamb. (Have your butcher remove as much fat and silver skin from this cut as possible.)

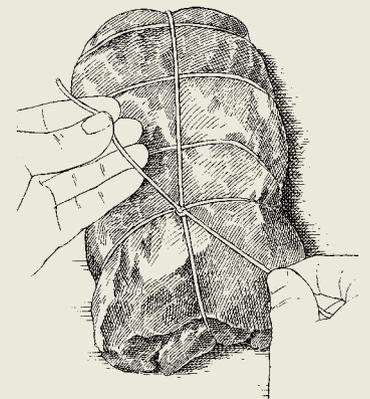
1. Tie twice diagonally, once around the upper part of the leg and again at the opposite angle.

2. Tie four times around the width to secure.

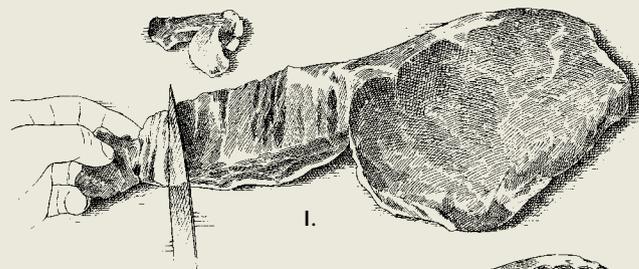


BONED MEAT

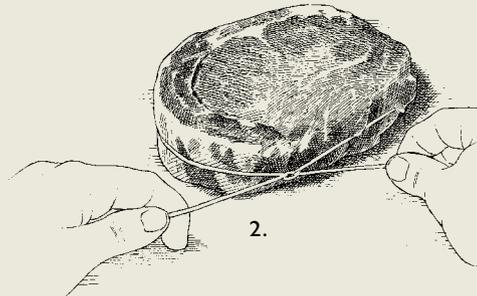
1. Certain boned cuts, such as sirloin (pork) roast, must be molded into shape before tying.



2. Tie lengthwise once or twice after tying widthwise in order to hold its shape.



1.

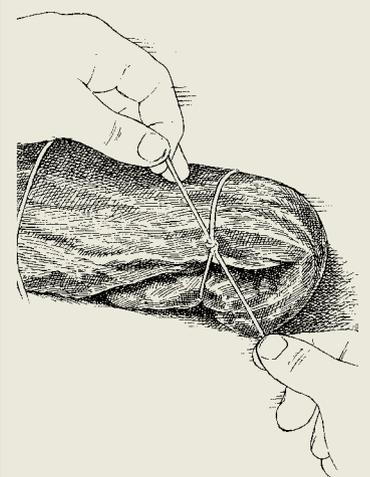


2.

RIB EYE STEAKS

1. At Savenor's specialty foods in Boston, owner and butcher Ronald Savenor likes to remove the thick vein of fat and gristle in rib eye steaks.

2. He then ties each steak around its width to hold it together. This tying method also works well for beef tenderloin medallions.



TENDERLOIN

1. Curl and tie the tapered tip of a tenderloin. Tie the tip so that it cooks at the same rate as the rest of the cut.