

# Buffalo

## Should it be what's for dinner?

### • DAVAL'S WHITE BUFFALO FARMS •

*By Henry Verden*



Ask someone what kind of meat they're having for dinner and odds are they'll say beef, pork, chicken, and maybe even lamb. All have been mainstays of the American diet for a long time. One other American meat fell out of favor but has seen a resurgence in recent years as its health benefits have become more apparent. That meat is bison.

DaVal's White Buffalo Farms sits on 46 acres along the banks of the Rock River just outside of Janesville, Wisconsin. As the name implies, it is the home of the famous Miracle, the sacred white buffalo. The farm is also home to standard and miniature horses, Scottish Highland cattle, French bulldogs (available for sale), Bengal and Siamese cats (also for sale), chickens, numerous varieties of ducks, and peacocks.

The owners, Dave and Valerie Heider, started bison farming on a whim. In 1989 they were attending a livestock

sale in Michigan. "Dave saw a big bull come through and said that one day he'd like to own some of those," said Valerie, "so we just started checking into it and before we even had our fencing done, we had our first three head." They now maintain around 70 bison.

The buffalo have been a constant learning experience to the Heiders. Valerie's biggest surprise so far is how fast they are. She explained, "They look big and clumsy and they are not. They can turn on a dime and jump six feet high. They're just phenomenal that way."

Commonly called buffalo, bison are actually more closely related to domestic cattle than to true buffalos, such as the water buffalo. Bison are the largest indigenous animals in North America. An adult bull can stand more than six feet at the hump and weigh more than a ton.

More than one million pounds of bison are currently



consumed annually in the U.S. Valerie says that the nutritional value of bison is the key. "Bison has lower fat, higher protein, and fewer calories than many other meats. Fat content on bison is only about 2.5%." Compared to beef, for instance, bison has 70% to 90% less fat, 50% less cholesterol, is 30% higher in protein, higher in iron, and there are no known human allergies. Also, no growth-inducing hormones or steroids are ever given to bison.

Most of the standard cuts that are available in beef are the same in bison. "We don't have any porterhouse or T-bones because bison is deboned, but we have ribeye, New York, tenderloin, sirloin, chuck roast, arm roast, and it is frequently ground in both bulk and available in pre-formed patties. We also offer bison jerky. Burgers are by far the most popular."



*Bison, once on the edge of extinction, have made a successful return with help from breeders like DaVal's.*

There's a trick to cooking bison. Because it is such a lean meat, it's easily overcooked. "The rule of thumb is low and slow," said Valerie. "You don't want to overcook it because it will dry out quickly. Keep it right around medium to medium-rare. If you like well-done meat, don't buy bison." She added that bison beginners are best to start off by cooking burgers because "it's difficult to overcook a burger."

DaVal's bison is available year-round at their farm and at various farmers' markets during the summer, including Janesville, McFarland, and Hilldale in Madison. There are more than 150 bison farmers statewide so you're bound to find one close to you. It's worth the effort to seek them out. Most will let you check out the animals and are glad to answer questions.

Bison has been referred to as the other red meat but as far as some people are concerned, it's the only red meat. Who can blame them? It's a healthy and tasty addition to any meat-lover's menu.

## Miracle

A Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota Sioux prophecy says that the birth of a white buffalo will hold great meaning to the entire world. As the white buffalo matures, it will turn white, red, brown, and black, the four colors of the peoples of the earth. When it turns black, all the world will be united in peace.

The Sioux and many other tribes think that the white buffalo of the prophecy was born on August 20, 1994. Her name was Miracle and she was born on the farm of Dave and Valerie Heider near Janesville, Wisconsin.

Miracle was considered a highly sacred symbol to those tribes. She was seen as a symbol of renewal and harmony for the world.

The Heiders opened their farm so that seven days a week, people could come out of simple curiosity or to offer prayers in her presence. Miracle died on September 19, 2004, and is buried on the Heider farm. They maintain a tribute to Miracle showing some of the thousands of offerings left for the sacred white buffalo both before and after her death.



## • IF YOU GO •

DaVal's White Buffalo Farms, Inc.  
2739 South River Road  
Janesville, WI 53546  
(608) 752-2224 or (608) 741-9632  
www.homestead.com/  
davalwhitebuffalofarm/Index.html

DaVal's White Buffalo Farms attends Beloit, Hilldale, Janesville, McFarland, Monona, and Stoughton Farmers' Markets.

Bison is available directly from producers all over the state. To find a producer near you contact:  
Wisconsin Bison Producers Association  
www.wibison.com

# Taste the Hawkwind experience!

## Baked Mustard Salmon

### Ingredients:

- 2 fresh salmon fillets
- 1/3 cup hot mustard
- 2 tbsp lime juice
- 1 medium chopped red onion
- 2 stalks chopped celery
- 1 medium chopped red bell pepper
- 6 chopped green onions

### Instructions:

Spray a glass baking dish with cooking spray or coat with one tablespoon olive oil. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place salmon in dish, spread mustard over salmon. Arrange red onion, celery, and red pepper around fish. Sprinkle green onion (white and green parts) over fish and vegetables. Pour lime juice over all. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 25–30 minutes. If you like your salmon to brown slightly, remove foil for last 10 minutes of cooking.

**Notes:** I used Clem's Hot Pepper Mustard for this dish.  
[www.hawkwindllc.com](http://www.hawkwindllc.com)

Recipe from: [www.natalies-recipes.com](http://www.natalies-recipes.com)



## Find Hawkwind products at these locations:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Alp and Dell</b><br>Monroe, WI  | <b>Jenifer St. Market</b><br>Madison, WI                    |
| <b>Arena Cheese</b><br>Arena, WI   | <b>Local Choice &amp; Deli</b><br>Spring Green, WI          |
| <b>Artamos Meat Market</b><br>Madison, WI  | <b>Mousehouse Cheesehaus</b><br>Windsor, WI                 |
| <b>Barriques Market</b><br>Fitchburg, WI   | <b>Mt. Horeb Mustard Museum</b><br>Mt. Horeb, WI            |
| <b>Cedar Grove Cheese</b><br>Plain, WI   | <b>Regent Market Co-op</b><br>Madison, WI                   |
| <b>Fraboni's Italian Specialties and Deli</b><br>Monona, WI                                  | <b>Rossings Fine Foods</b><br>Argyle, WI                    |
| <b>Gino's Italian Deli</b><br>Madison, WI  | <b>Schuman's Wisconsin Cheese Country</b><br>Dodgeville, WI |
| <b>House of Wisconsin Cheese</b><br>Madison, WI  | <b>Steve's Wine Market</b><br>Madison, WI                   |
| <b>Jacobson's Brother's Meats and Deli</b><br>Madison, Fitchburg, Sun Prairie, Stoughton, WI | <b>Trillium Natural Foods</b><br>Mt. Horeb, WI              |
|  | <b>Williamson St. Co-op</b><br>Madison, WI                  |



Discover how magical a partnership with nature can taste!

## Hawkwind LLC

*"Where Nature and Human Beings Meet in Passionate Conversation"*

### Award-winning artisanal mustards and relish

- Beautiful fusion of colors and flavors that are clean and robust.
- Small handcrafted batches.
- Herbicide and pesticide free.
- Family owned farm.
- Retail and wholesale orders.

(608) 356-2926

[hawkwind@jvl.net](mailto:hawkwind@jvl.net)  
[www.hawkwindllc.com](http://www.hawkwindllc.com)