

# Come what may, we will braai

The good news for consumers is that the cost of our favourite pastime is coming down. Despite inflation being unhinged since the dark days of the Covid lockdowns, the most recent data from the Pietermaritzburg Equity Justice and Dignity (PMGEJD) group shows that the cost of inviting friends over for boerie rolls decreased by 1.2% in July, and by 2.2% year-on-year.

But there's so much more than cost when it comes to the art and craft of the braai. Let's take a deeper dive into what the data tells us about consumer buying habits and preferences, and what supermarkets, hypermarkets and wholesalers could be doing to make their customers' braai lives easier, creative and tasty, and even more affordable.

## Trends shaping meat demand

**Organic produce.** While there is a growing demand for organic and ethically sourced meat in South Africa, organic, free-range and 'free trade' meat remains the purview of the wealthier demographics. According to Food Stuff South Africa, "demand for organic meat remains very low as it is generally very expensive and thus unaffordable for the bulk of the country's population." Even though awareness of the benefits of organic meat is increasing, partly because of growing public knowledge of farming practices and the risks associated with chemically produced animal feed, the bottom line is that ethically sourced and free-range



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meat is expensive, and not getting any cheaper.

Organic farms are significantly more costly to run. In some instances the animals are eating for up to double the amount of time. Natural fertilisers and organic animal feed are far more expensive than synthetic, chemical and GMO (genetically modified organisms) materials. Organic farms require more generous space allowances per animal, for example, chickens must be able to stretch both wings at the same time. The increased costs associated with organic farming are passed onto the retailer and the consumer.



Sheep grazing helps to control weeds and encourages white clover. [www.teagasc.ie/](http://www.teagasc.ie/)

**South Africans are a resilient bunch ...**

**No matter how bad things get economically, politically or globally, we always seem to find the time to put aside our worries and light up a braai.**

# Quality meat for Braai Day with our Insulated Panels



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**Premium products.** Butcheries and meat suppliers in South Africa are responding to the shift towards organic, free-range, grass-fed and ethically sourced meat by offering a wider range of options, often highlighted as premium products. This trend aligns with the global movement towards more responsible meat consumption.

**Latest flavours.** South Africans aren't shy to look abroad and take inspiration from what's trending globally when it comes to spicing up our braais. With social media as the great leveller, we only need to take a quick look at what some of our counterparts are eating to know that it's not too different from what South Africans are trying out in their own kitchens.

However, traditional flavours are still very popular with South African consumers. According to Innovative Market Insights, smoked is the number one flavour for meat products, with chilli a close second. Then come the usual flavours: barbecue, spices and cheese, with flavours like garlic and black pepper also on the menu. Seasonings and spices infused with cumin, coriander, mustard seeds, peppercorns and turmeric are also among the latest popular flavours

Of course, going by trends alone isn't going to work for everyone, especially in a country where tastes are as diverse as fire lighting techniques. In-store demos and KYC (Know Your Customer) surveys will give supermarkets, hypermarkets, independent butcheries and wholesalers insights into their customers preferences, enabling stores to cater to their specific tastes.



Marinades, of course, can contain anything that goes well with a food. The ingredients of the marinade penetrate the meat, keeping it juicy and flavourful. The oil transfers moisture and aromas to the meat. The sour part makes it soft. Aromatics give flavour and aroma.

When marinating meat, always use clean glass utensils and low temperatures to avoid any alteration or contamination – meats can contain bacteria which can be transmitted to the marinade.

Do not use metal utensils or aluminum foil, because they can give food a metallic flavour.

Photo & caption: <https://koutsioftis.gr/en/beef-tips/>

**Convenience is always king.** Covid made everyone an expert at home cooking, but just because the crisis is over doesn't mean consumer habits have suddenly changed. Last year, the Specialty Food Association set up a Trendspotter Panel to help supermarkets and retailers get a better sense of how their customers are cooking; it turns out that the customer's appetite for convenience hasn't abated. Accordingly, people still want restaurant-quality food at home, but without the hassle of having to make it themselves, and so "will look at brands that have shortcuts in cooking these meals." These include meal kits, ready-to-cook and eat kits, as seen in brands such as UCook and FitFood4u.

**Tech up.** To meet the demands of these trends, butchers and meat suppliers are investing in advanced equipment that enhances efficiency and

product quality. Innovations such as temperature-controlled preparation areas, high-precision cutting machines, and sophisticated weighing systems are becoming standard in modern butcheries. These technologies help reduce food wastage, maintain hygiene, and ensure consistency in product offerings, which are critical factors for building consumer trust and loyalty.

In summary, the trends in free-range and organic produce, innovative marinades, and convenience-orientated products are not only reshaping consumer expectations but also driving significant changes in how meat is produced, processed, and marketed in South Africa. Supermarkets, suppliers and butchers who adapt to these trends by incorporating sustainability, innovation, and convenience into their operations are the ones most likely to thrive.

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## Best practices for better butcheries

To optimise product supply, selection, and variety, butchers and retailers should adopt a range of best practices that align with the current market trends and consumer demands. These practices ensure that offerings are both appealing to customers and operationally efficient.

- Forward-thinking supermarkets, wholesalers and hypers can look to implement **data-driven inventory management technology** to help with demand forecasting. Using advanced **data analytics** to predict customer demand based on historical sales data, seasonal trends and market research helps to maintain optimal stock levels, minimise wastage, and ensure that popular items are always available.
- Adopt a **just-in-time (JIT)** inventory system where products are ordered and received only as needed, based on accurate demand forecasting. This reduces storage costs and the risk of perishable meat and meat products going unsold.
- Offer a **broad selection of meats**, including traditional favourites and more exotic or niche products that cater to diverse consumer preferences. This includes a mix of free-range, organic, and conventionally farmed meats to appeal to different segments of the market.
- With that done, introduce **seasonal or limited-edition products** to create a sense of urgency and exclusivity. These could include special marinades, unique cuts, or festive braai packs that capitalise on seasonal consumer behaviour.



By implementing these best practices, wholesalers, butcheries, supermarkets and hypermarkets can effectively optimise their product supply, selection, and variety, aligning their operations with consumer demand and market trends. This approach improves customer satisfaction and enhances operational efficiency and profitability.

- **Build strong relationships** with reliable suppliers who can provide high-quality products consistently. Establishing partnerships with local farmers and producers can also ensure a steady supply of fresh, sustainable, and locally sourced meat, which is increasingly important to consumers.
- Ensure robust **cold chain logistics** to maintain the freshness and safety of perishable goods from supplier to store. This includes investing in high-quality refrigeration systems and monitoring equipment to prevent spoilage and extend the shelf life of products. This goes hand-in-hand with optimising logistics by sourcing products locally where possible, reducing transportation time and costs, and enhancing the freshness of products.
- Use high-quality **eco-friendly packaging** that not only preserves the product but also appeals to environmentally conscious consumers. Packaging that highlights the ethical and sustainable attributes of the product can further enhance its appeal.
- **Stay ahead** of market trends by regularly introducing new products and discontinuing underperforming ones. This keeps the selection fresh and exciting for customers, encouraging repeat visits. Establish systems for gathering customer feedback on product selection and quality and use this feedback to continuously refine and improve your meat and meat products ranges, ensuring that it meets customer needs and preferences.



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Browsing fresh tree leaves and small branches have many nutritional benefits for livestock. They are good sources of protein, vitamins and minerals. Photo & caption: <https://agricology.co.uk/>

### What are the differences between organic and non-organic meat?

- Organic livestock and the meat produced from these animals are subject to strict processes involving animal welfare, animal feed and how the meat is processed.
- Organic livestock is raised without the use of routine antibiotics. Animals raised for mass production on factory farms where they live in close proximity may pass diseases to one another, and for this reason they are given antibiotics. When the farm is not overcrowded, the need for antibiotics decreases or is eliminated.
- Growth hormones are given to livestock for faster maturation and production. In organic meat, the animals are raised without growth hormones, which means they mature at a slower, more natural pace. Growth hormones and antibiotics pass through the animal and can be transmitted into the ground, which affects groundwater.
- No livestock feed additives or artificial fertilisers may be used in the raising of organic livestock.
- Organic meat contains no preservatives and chemicals, which are used to increase the shelf-life of regular meat.

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No.119 of 1990

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- Poultry Meat
  - (CONSOLIDATED DOCUMENT R.946 of 27 March 1992, R.988 of 25 July 1997 AND R.471 of 22 April 2016)
- Processed Meat Products
  - (R.1283 of 04 October 2019)
- Certain Raw Processed Meat Products
  - (R.2410 of 26 August 2022)

- ✓ Verify Labeling Requirements
- ✓ Verify Compositional Standards
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**Cooking beef to the right temperature is important both for food safety and achieving the desired taste. By using a meat thermometer and understanding the various internal temperature ranges, you can ensure that your beef meat is not only delicious, but also safe to eat.**

**Rare (45°C / 113°F).** This is the ideal internal temperature for those who enjoy rare beef. The beef will be red in the centre and slightly warm. It's essential to note that cooking beef to this temperature may not eliminate all harmful bacteria, so it's highly important to source your meat from a trusted supplier.

**Medium-Rare (55°C / 131°F).** This internal temperature results in a warm, red centre with a slightly firmer texture than rare beef. For many, this is considered the perfect level of doneness, as it maintains the meat's juiciness while being tender and flavourful.

**Medium (60°C / 140°F).** Here, the meat will be pink in the centre and warmer than medium-rare, resulting in a firmer texture without the meat being too dry.

**Medium-Well (65°C / 149°F).** The meat will have only a hint of pink in the centre and will be more firm, but also less juicy than medium or medium-rare beef. This more cooked texture, will still retain some moisture and tenderness in the meat.

**Well-Done (71°C / 160°F and above).** At this stage, the meat will be brown throughout, with no pink remaining. Although well-done beef can be quite dry and tough, some individuals prefer this level for personal preference or dietary reasons.

**Let beef rest after cooking:** Regardless of your preferred level of doneness, it's important to let the beef rest after removing it from the heat source, to enrich the flavour and juiciness. While resting, the temperature of the meat continues to rise slightly, further destroying any harmful microbes. Additionally, resting allows the juices to redistribute within the meat, resulting in a more flavourful and tender dish.

By using a meat thermometer and following these guidelines, you can prepare delicious but, most importantly, safe beef dishes that cater to individual preferences.

Photo & caption: <https://koutsoftis.gr/en/beef-tips/>

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## Braai brainstorm

Supermarkets and wholesalers can enhance their butchery and braai offerings by integrating new equipment, products, and innovative ideas that align with current consumer trends. Here are some specific recommendations:

**Buy advanced butchery equipment.** Investing in high-precision meat cutting machines can ensure uniformity in product size and quality, which is crucial for maintaining consistency, especially in pre-packaged items.

**Vacuum tumblers** accelerate the marination process by evenly distributing flavours throughout the meat in a shorter time. This equipment can be particularly useful for creating pre-marinated, ready-to-cook products, which are popular among time-conscious consumers.

Implementing **advanced refrigeration systems** with smart temperature monitoring can help maintain the freshness and safety of perishable products. These systems can automatically adjust to temperature changes, reducing the risk of spoilage and ensuring compliance with food safety standards.

**Mix it up with new products.** Consider offering a range of plant-based meat alternatives like plant-based sausages, burgers, and even meat-like cuts that cater to vegetarians, vegans, and flexitarians.

Develop or source **unique marinades** and spice rubs that cater to diverse flavour preferences – such as Asian, Middle Eastern, and African spice blends – which can attract customers looking for something new. Offering these as standalone products or as part of a pre-marinated meat package adds convenience and variety.

<https://koutsioftis.gr/en/beef-tips/>



**Pre-prepared braai packs** include a variety of meats, sides, and condiments, curated to offer a complete braai experience. These packs can be tailored to different occasions (family gatherings, gourmet experiences) and can include unique items like marinated vegetables or special sauces.

**Innovate your shop space** with in-store braai demonstrations and events. Hosting in-store braai demonstrations where chefs or butchers showcase cooking techniques and new products can engage customers and encourage them to try new offerings.

You can also offer **custom butchery services**, such as preparing custom cuts and preparation services. Customers can request specific sizes or marination levels, which can enhance the shopping experience. This service can be complemented by providing expert advice on cooking techniques and flavour pairings.

“ In your butchery, offer custom cuts and preparation services. Customers can request specific sizes or marination levels. This service can be complemented by providing expert advice on cooking techniques and flavour pairings. ”

**Get online.** Expanding e-commerce options with a focus on butchery and braai products allows customers to conveniently order their meat and braai essentials online. Offering same-day delivery, click-and-collect services, or subscription boxes can add value, especially for time-strapped consumers.

Consider introducing **apps or digital platforms** where customers can browse recipes, get tips from your butchery team, and order custom cuts, which can enhance customer interaction and loyalty. These tools can also gather data on consumer preferences to further refine product offerings.

By incorporating these advanced equipment options, innovative products, and creative ideas, supermarkets and wholesalers can significantly enhance their butchery and braai offerings, stay ahead of market trends, and meet evolving consumer expectations.



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## Catering for consumers

Now that we've explored some of the trends and best practices for butcheries, supermarkets and wholesalers, let's take a look at the braai from a consumer's perspective. Several value-adds could significantly enhance your customers' shopping experience for meat and braai products:

**Convenience options.** Offering pre-marinated, ready-to-cook meats and complete braai packs can save consumers time and effort. These products allow shoppers to enjoy the authentic braai experience with minimal preparation, which is particularly appealing to busy individuals or to those new to braai culture.

Providing meal kits that include everything needed for a braai – from meat and marinades to side dishes and condiments – adds value by simplifying the shopping process. This can also be an attractive option for customers wanting to try something new or hosting guests.

**Transparency.** Providing clear and detailed labeling that includes information about the sourcing, quality, and ethical standards of the meat forms part of the legislative requirements of packaging. It also builds trust and loyalty in your store, and your meat products. This transparency is particularly important for free-range and organic products.

**Meal prep information.** Offering recipe cards or digital links to recipes that pair with the purchased products can inspire customers and make their cooking experience more enjoyable. This can be done through in-store displays, QR codes on

packaging, or integrated into online shopping platforms.

**Packaging sustainability & eco-friendly options.** Consumers are increasingly concerned about sustainability. Offering meat products in eco-friendly or recyclable packaging can differentiate a retailer and appeal to environmentally conscious shoppers.

**Ethical sourcing.** Highlighting products that are ethically sourced, such as free-range, organic, or locally farmed meats, can meet the requirements of consumers who prioritise animal welfare and sustainability.

**Digital integration and support.** Expanding online shopping options, including same-day delivery and click-and-collect services, can add significant convenience for customers. This is particularly valuable for those with busy lifestyles or who prefer to avoid in-store shopping. Braai Day Specials will always generate interest among South African consumers.

**Customised shopping.** Implementing digital platforms where customers can customise their online or in-store butchery orders, receive personalised recommendations, or access cooking tips for specific cuts of meat adds an individual touch to the shopping experience. This can be particularly appealing to tech-savvy consumers.

By incorporating these value-adds, in-store butcheries and meat departments can create a more engaging, convenient, and satisfying shopping experience for consumers, ultimately driving customer loyalty and boosting sales.

## The braai nation stands firm

South Africa is a braai nation second to none. Business – including FMCG retail and wholesale – may have been warily watching the events of the last elections unfold, wondering which way consumer sentiment would turn. Meanwhile, (extra)ordinary South Africans were busy doing what they do best: making plans while making friends around the fire.

If the past tells us anything, it's that the clouds on the horizon are swept away by the smoke from the many braais around our nation. With an improving economy, some savvy investment to create a top-quality in-store butchery, and a close connection with their communities, retailers and wholesalers should have every faith that come what may, South Africa will braai. **SR**



Take care to apply faithful quality systems to make sure that the products that arrive on your plate are absolutely safe to consume!  
<https://koutsioftis.gr/en/beef-tips/>

### Sources:

[www.freddyhirsch.co.za/](http://www.freddyhirsch.co.za/) | [www.tmporganics.com.au/](http://www.tmporganics.com.au/)  
<https://agricology.co.uk/> | [www.teagasc.ie/](http://www.teagasc.ie/)



Serves: 6  
Preparation time: 15 minutes  
Cooking time: 50 minutes

## GOLDI, COUNTY FAIR, FESTIVE or MOUNTAIN VALLEY CHICKEN PIECES

### INGREDIENTS

#### Chicken:

6 chicken pieces  
160g butter  
5ml paprika  
5ml onion powder (optional)  
5ml garlic powder  
salt

#### Chunky chakalaka:

15ml oil  
2 onions, chopped  
15ml medium curry powder  
10ml cayenne pepper  
60ml tomato sauce  
1 tin chopped tomato  
4 carrots, chopped  
3 peppers (yellow, green, and red)  
a handful of cherry tomatoes  
1 tin baked beans  
salt



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Ideal for a family meal

# BUTTER-BASTED CHICKEN WITH CHAKALAKA AND ROOSTERBROOD

Nothing beats easy-to-prepare braai chicken. It gives you more time to spend with your guests!

### Method:

#### Chicken

Mix the butter with the spices. Smear half the spice butter over the chicken. Braai the chicken for 35 minutes, turning and basting with the remaining butter.

#### For the chunky chakalaka:

Heat oil in a pan over medium heat (or over the coals). Fry the onion, curry, and cayenne for 2 minutes. Stir in the tomato sauce, tomatoes, carrots, and peppers. Simmer for 15 minutes. When the carrots are tender, add the cherry tomatoes and baked beans. Season.

#### For the roosterbrood:

Mix the flour, salt, sugar, and yeast together. Add the butter into the flour mixture, rubbing it with your fingertips until the mixture resembles crumbs. Add water to the dry ingredients to form a soft dough. Place aside, cover, and allow to rise for 1 hour. Knead the dough again and shape into 12 balls. Place the dough aside for 10 minutes. Flatten the balls slightly and sprinkle with a little flour. Cook over a low fire for 10 minutes on each side. Tap the bread with your fingers. When it makes a hollow sound, it's ready to serve.

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Serves: 8  
Preparation time: 1 hour  
Cooking time: 45 minutes

Tasty & Delicious

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## GOLDI, COUNTY FAIR, FESTIVE or MOUNTAIN VALLEY CHICKEN PIECES

### INGREDIENTS

#### Chicken:

About 10-12 chicken pieces  
(fresh or defrosted frozen pieces)  
2 red peppers sliced into large piece  
2 onions peeled and chopped into large chunks  
½ cup (125 ml) oil  
1 tsp (5 ml) paprika  
2 tsp (10 ml) cayenne pepper  
1 ½ (7.5 ml) tsp salt  
4 cloves garlic peeled or 2 tsp (10 ml) crushed garlic  
2 Tbsp (30 ml) chilli flakes

Zest and juice of 1 lemon  
1/2 tsp (2.5 ml) dried rosemary  
¼ cup (60 ml) red grape vinegar

#### For the crispy potatoes:

800g-1kg small potatoes, peeled  
3 Tbsp (45 ml) - 3 cups vegetable oil  
(depending on how you cook the potatoes)  
Salt to taste

## PERI PERI CHICKEN PIECES WITH CRISPY POTATOES

Perfect for a braai!

### Method:

#### Chicken

Toss the peppers and onions in half the oil and either char on the braai or roast in the oven at 200°C for 20 minutes or until slightly blackened. Then blend all the ingredients together until you have a paste - or use a pestle and mortar to make a paste.

Marinate the chicken pieces in half of the peri-peri paste for at least 30 minutes or overnight. Cook over medium to low coals until the chicken is cooked.

Heat the reserved paste in a separate small pot and cook for 5 minutes or until heated through - serve with the chicken.

To make the crispy potatoes, peel small potatoes and parboil in just enough water to cover until soft. Strain. Either deep fry the potatoes in hot vegetable oil or coat in 3 Tbsp oil and bake in the oven at 200°C for 20-30 minutes or the air fryer at 200°C for 20 minutes.

Season well with salt. Serve.

# Great South African Chicken Every Day!



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