

Simple method to butchering a Rabbit

<http://www.instructables.com/id/Simple-method-to-butchering-Rabbits/?ALLSTEPS>

by Little Tassie Prepper



This is the system I have been using for the last few months. I find it to be very quick, and the least messy of the methods of rabbit meat production I have attempted. If you are interested in this, you may be interested in reading my blog. It is located at Little Tassie Prepper.

I think I should point out that this Instructable has many images showing the process of butchering a rabbit. I think that people who would find this distasteful should consider not going any further.

Before you begin this process you must prepare your area for work. You will need:

- A blade sharpener (I use a simple one)
- Several knives. At least one small knife for precision work, one heavy duty knife for cutting between joints.
- Rubber gloves (makes working on the rabbit much easier, and will prevent you from getting to messy)
- A container for the unwanted parts of the rabbit (I use an old plastic bag, reused from the shopping)
- A container for the parts of the rabbit you want. (I have recently decided that an Esky filled with cold water would be a suitable receptacle)

- A means of suspending the rabbit while you work on it. (I use two large nails that I have nailed into a pallet as hooks).
- Heavy duty scissors or garden shears.

Step 1:



Firstly, I feel that the rabbit must be killed in a humane manner. Some people would do this by breaking the rabbit's neck, some by severing the arteries, some prefer a bullet to the brain. I feel a swift, precise, blow to the base of the rabbits skull is the best method, followed by severing the veins. A quick death for the rabbit and doesn't know what is about to happen, so it is much more civilized.

Once the rabbit has died, I usually secure it to the hooks/nails by pushing the back legs of the rabbit onto the nails, so that they pierce the skin between the Tarsis bone, and the Achilles ligament. The rabbits

stomach should be towards you at this stage. I place a bucket on the ground, in line with the head, and I use the short blade to sever/cut into the skin of the rabbit's neck. Once the skin is broken and I can reach the flesh underneath I proceed to cut the veins and the muscles around the neck as well as sever the skin around the neck. I then use the larger knife and cut the ligaments between the vertebrae to allow me to remove the head from the body. I place this into the scrap area to later be given to my dogs. I allow the blood from the rabbit to drip into the bucket, which will later be added to my garden beds.

Step 2:





While the blood is dripping into the bucket I take the shears and cut off the two front feet of the rabbit. These are placed in the scrap pile. After several minutes, when the blood appears to have left the body, I take the small knife and proceed to cut the skin from around the back legs. I do this by pinching the skin near the back foot and, using the small knife, cut a small slice to make a hole. I then insert the blade into the cut and gently extend the cut all the way around the leg, so that the skin on the leg is now separated from the skin on the foot. I do the same thing on the other back leg. I then insert the knife into the leg skin, angling the blade down and towards where the belly button would be located. I make a cut so that the stomach skin is on one part, and the genital area is left at the top. I then do the same on the other back leg.

Step 3:





I now take the rabbit off the hooks and turn it around so that it's back is towards me. I insert the knife under the skin, near the rabbits tail, and I proceed to cut the skin so that the tail and genital area are left on the rabbit, while the skin on the back is now separated from this section. Once complete I grab each side of the skin and pull downwards. The skin should slide off, easily removed as the front paws and head are no longer there. The skin will now be inside out and look similar to a sleeve. I place this aside for now and continue with removing the rabbit meat.

Step 4:





I work my way upwards when I remove the meat on the rabbit. I do this by taking the small knife and beginning to work on the front legs. I locate the muscle lines of the shoulder and deltoid, and carefully cut this from the body. I work the blade downwards until I reach the shoulder, then cut the meat from the shoulder. I take the large knife and insert this into the shoulder socket, severing the ligaments and using the blade to pry the leg from the body. I do the same on the other front leg, placing both aside for keeping.

Step 5:

Now it is time to remove the back straps. I run my finger along the back to work out where the muscle and bones are located, before commencing the cutting. Using the small knife, I run the blade down the side of the backbone from the buttocks area to the clavicle. This cut should be as deep as the rabbits ribs. I then cut the top and bottom of the strap, and pull on it firmly so that it partially comes off the body. If it doesn't come off cleanly, I sometimes use the knife to gently sever any tissue holding the strap to the body so that I end up with a long piece of meat. This is done to both sides of the backbone so that you should end up with a pair of back-straps.







Step 6:

If you are interested in harvesting some of the internal organs, now would be the best time to do this. As you have removed all the meat from the lower sections of the rabbit, any error in this step that results in rupturing the intestines or bladder will not be disastrous... the meat which would be effected by dripping fluids have now been removed. Pinch the membrane which covers the stomach of the rabbit then, using the small knife I cut a small, 1cm hole, into the stomach lining. I insert a finger into this hole and use it to ensure the contents of the stomach are away from the blade. I then insert the knife into the hole with the back of the blade against my finger. I proceed to slice the membrane down to the ribcage. I don't need the knife for this next part so I put the blade down. Using one hand I gently move the intestines and other organs away from the ribcage, and with the other I reach in and grasp hold of the organs I desire. The diaphragm usually needs to be punctured, which can be done with a firm poke of the finger. The organs are usually able to be removed with a strong tug. These are then set aside and the contents of the stomach allowed to fall into the ribcage.





Step 7:

Finally we are able to remove the legs. Taking the small knife I cut the top of the thigh muscle close to the tail and slice downwards, following the line of the muscle. I then do the same thing along the bottom edge of the thigh muscle. I should now be left with the bare joint. I take the large knife and inset it into the ball socket, severing the leg ligaments and pry the bones apart. You need to be careful here that the body does not fall onto the ground, as only one leg will be keeping the rabbit on the hook. Once the leg is removed from the body, I use the shears to cut the foot off the leg before putting it to the side. This process is repeated for the last leg. I usually put the body into the waste bucket, or into the blood bucket for later retrieval.





All the meat taken from the Rabbit should be rinsed in clean, cold water. This will remove any hairs that are on the meat (I find that there are always some) and begin the process of lowering the temperature of the meat.

Currently I do not really do anything with the rest of the rabbit. Some people remove the bones and use them to cook stock for cooking. I usually add the left overs to a hot compost pile and add the nutrients to my garden. If you are unable to do these, I would recommend placing the animal leftovers in a hole and burying them or burning them in a burner.