

**Seasonal Eating**  
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**Meat Roulades**  
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It's finally time for fresh spring vegetables to start making it to the table. As we think about spring celebrations such as Mother's Day, graduations and weddings coming up, these fresh and vibrant vegetables lighten up meals and make them pretty and are refreshing after the heavy, comforting, warming meals of winter. Using these vegetables as a stuffing for meat roulades makes a beautiful and impressive dish for any celebration and is a way to incorporate vegetables into spring meals.

A roulade is a filled and rolled piece of meat or pastry. The sweet version is a Swiss roll with cake spread with custard, jelly or cream and rolled up. But you can also make roulades with meats that are spread with a filling and then rolled up, seared and baked. You can do this with chicken, beef, pork or even fish fillets.



There are a few tips to make your roulade perfect:

Choose the right cut: Thin, tender cuts like thin sirloin steaks or flank steak or pork loin, or chicken breasts work well for rolling.

Pound it evenly: Use a meat mallet to flatten the meat to an even thickness—this helps with rolling and even cooking – about a quarter to half inch thick is good.

Season generously: Since the meat is rolled, make sure to season both sides after pounding.

Pick a balanced filling: Avoid overly wet fillings that could make the roulade soggy. When using vegetables like mushrooms or spinach, sauté them first to remove excess water.

Roll tightly but gently: Use kitchen twine or toothpicks to secure the roll so it holds its shape while cooking.

Sear before baking: Browning the roulade in a pan before roasting or braising adds depth of flavor.

Cook to the right temperature: Use a meat thermometer to ensure it's cooked through but still juicy. The recommendation is to cook any stuffed meat to 165 degrees F.

Let it rest: Allow the roulade to rest before slicing to keep the juices inside.

The recipe below is a chicken breast roulade stuffed with mushrooms, fresh spinach, asparagus and Parmesan cheese with a pea sauce over the top. Perfect for a beautifully special dinner or brunch! For more information and recipes check out the Seasonal Eating page at [bedford.tennessee.edu](http://bedford.tennessee.edu).

**Baked Chicken Roulade with Spring Vegetables**

2 large boneless, skinless chicken breasts

black pepper

kosher salt

5 tablespoons butter

1/2 cup chopped onion

4 ounces chopped mushrooms

2 cloves garlic, minced and divided

5 ounces baby spinach  
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
8 fresh thin asparagus spears  
1 tablespoon flour  
2 tablespoons white wine  
3/4 cup chicken broth  
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat leaf parsley  
1/2 cup frozen peas

Place chicken between 2 sheets of heavy-duty plastic wrap and flatten to 1/4" thickness using a flat sided meat mallet or rolling pin. Sprinkle chicken with pepper and salt and set aside. Melt 2 tablespoons of butter in an oven-proof skillet. Sauté onion and mushrooms until mushrooms are slightly browned and onions are translucent. Add half the garlic and the spinach and cook until wilted. Spoon half the spinach mixture over each breast, leaving a 1/2" border around edges. Top with Parmesan cheese and asparagus and roll up. Secure with wooden toothpicks or tie with kitchen string. Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter with the olive oil in the skillet. Add chicken and cook 6-8 minutes, turning to brown on all sides. Transfer skillet to oven and bake at 425 degrees for 10-15 minutes or until 165 degrees F. Transfer chicken to a cutting board and cover loosely with aluminum foil to keep warm.

For sauce: Melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter in skillet with drippings over medium-high heat. Add remaining half of garlic and sauté slightly. Whisk in flour and cook 1 minute. Add white wine and cook, stirring constantly, 1 minute. Whisk in chicken broth and lemon juice and cook 2 more minutes or until thickened. Stir in parsley and peas. Remove toothpicks/string and slice the rested chicken. Place on four plates and spoon sauce over chicken. Serve immediately.