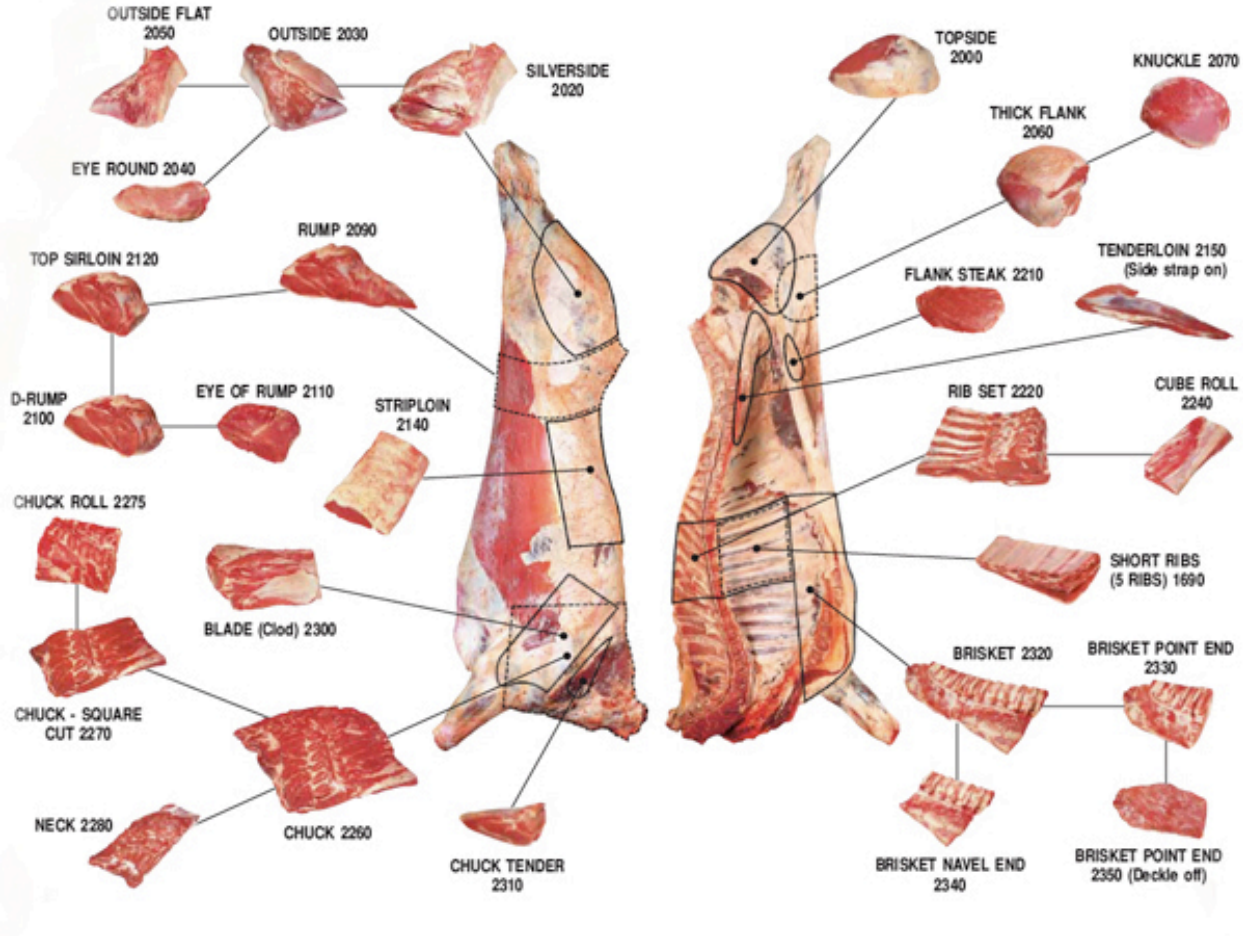
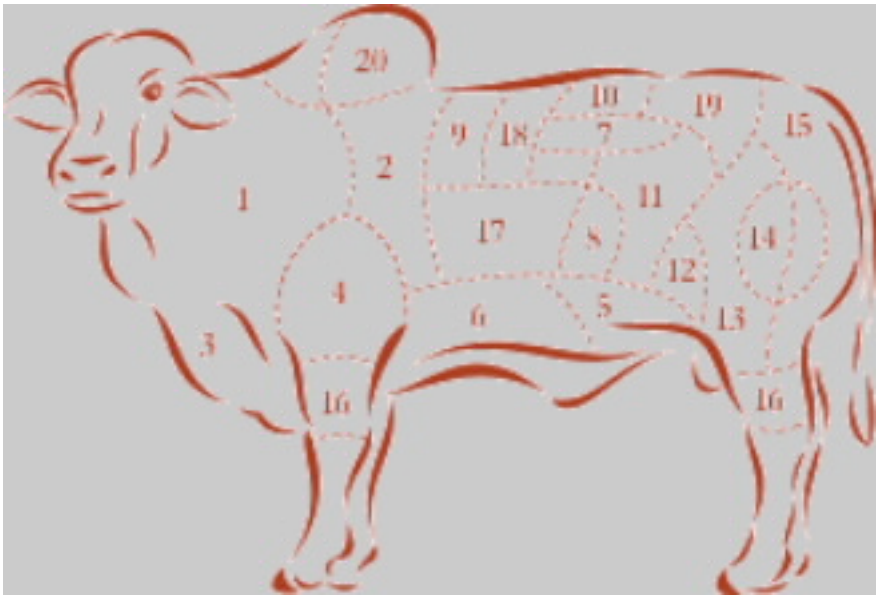
BEEF



Summer is the most wonderful time of the year for steak lovers who love to grill. Cut such as the T-bones, ribeyes, New York strips and filet mignon are all time favorites for good reason: all offer a deep beef flavor, a satisfying tender bite and the delicious aroma of meat grilled over a flame.

Beef Cuts



1. Neck - Hard but very tasteful meat, ideal for stews and ragouts.
2. Forerib - appropriate for grinding, and steaks.
3. Breast - a good meat for stews, soups and sauces.
4. Arm - forelimb/shoulder blade. Ideal for grinding, minced meat.
5. Upper Udder Meat - is considered the most tasteful of the meats, since it is the only one remaining inside the animal, being constantly irrigated by the blood flow. It is usually served rare.
6. Rib - is the complete rib quarter, from which the rib strip and vaccum are extracted. Since the piece, which should be baked whole, is shelled formed, the fat located at the center, contributes for it not to become dried up by the fire. Each piece should remain over a low fire, for at least four hours, with the bone side turned towards the burning coals. It should be served

rare or medium.

7. Filet Mignon - traditional and vanguard people agree that it is an extremely tender meat, since it has no contact point with the animals' limbs, but modestly tasteful due to the poor blood irrigation. Excellent for steaks and roast-beef. Its grill point should be rare or medium.

8. Rump Steak - it comes out of the lower part of the rump. Meat with fibers, tender with a strong flavor. Its grill point should be rare.

9. Undercut Overlay - it contains the beefsteak and is located at the beginning of the ribs. (Up to the fifth rib). Almost where the sirloin is found.

10. Sirloin - at its central part, which is located at the center of the animal's backbone, is found the sausage undercut, also called entrecote. Consisting of a compact and tasteful whole, its grill point is rare or medium.

11. Rump - is considered by many experts as the queen of the noble meats. The rump steak and the cut from the rump are extracted from it. Grill point, rare.

12. Round of Beef - is mainly appropriated for the preparation of minced meat dishes or beefsteaks.

13. Stiff Rounds - like the round of beef, it is ideal for stews or roast-beefs. Not appropriate for barbecue.

14. Soft Round - proper for excellent beefs and barbecues.

15. Part of Rear Quarter - good meat for beef, baked meat, roast-beef and stew.

16. Front/Rear Muscles - no other meat is better than it for stews and pottages. The tasteful marrow bone is cut from it.

17. Undercut Skirt - ideal for ragouts and excellent for minced meat.
18. Undercut From the Back - good meat for fine dishes and ragouts.
19. Cut From the back - preferred by Brazilians and also the most requested for barbecue, this meat is a part of the rump. It weighs between one and one and half kilograms, and may be cut in different ways. The strip rump is removed from the center piece and is cut lengthwise in thick strips. The noble rump cut is the piece's end, and the
ball rump, which is the thicker part of the piece, is cut diagonally and against the fibers. It shoud be served medium or rare.
20. Hump - is the humpback of the animal, consisting of a fatty and very tasty meatball. The piece should be broiled as a whole during approximately four hours, wrapped in cellophane for it to become tender and for the fat not to splash on the fire. The cellophane should be removed only a few minutes before serving time.

BUYING BEEF

Regardless of their quality grade, some cuts of meat are naturally more tender than others. Cuts from the less-used muscles along the back of the animal - the rib and loin sections - will always be more tender than those from the more active muscles such as the shoulder, _ank, and leg. Since the most

tender cuts make up only a small proportion of a beef or lamb carcass, they are in greatest demand and usually command a higher price than other cuts.

Each USDA beef quality grade is a measure of a distinct level of quality - and it takes eight grades to span the range. They are USDA Prime, Choice, Select, Standard, Commercial, Utility, Cutter, and Canner. USDA Prime, Choice, Select, and Standard grades come from younger beef. The highest grade, USDA Prime, is used mostly by hotels and restaurants, but a small amount is sold at retail markets.

The grade most widely sold at retail is USDA Choice. However, consumer preference for leaner beef has increased the popularity of the Select grade of beef. Select grade can now be found at most meat counters. Standard and Commercial grade beef frequently is sold as ungraded or as “brand name” meat.

The three lower grades - USDA Utility, Cutter, and Canner - are seldom, if ever, sold at retail but are used instead to make ground beef and manufactured meat items such as frankfurters.

USDA Prime: Prime grade beef is the ultimate in tenderness, juiciness, and flavor. It has abundant marbling of fat within the lean - which enhances both flavor and juiciness. Prime roasts and steaks are unexcelled for dry-heat cooking (roasting and broiling).

USDA Choice: Choice grade beef has less marbling than Prime, but is of very high quality. Choice roasts and steaks from the loin and rib will be very tender, juicy, and flavorful and are, like Prime, suited to dryheat cooking. Many of the less tender cuts, such as those from the rump, round, and blade chuck, can also be cooked with dry heat.

USDA Select: Select grade beef is very uniform in quality and somewhat leaner than the higher grades. It is fairly tender, but, because it has less marbling, it may lack some of the juiciness and flavor of the higher grades. Only the tender cuts should be cooked with dry heat. Other cuts should be marinated before cooking or cooked with moisture to obtain maximum tenderness and flavor.

HELPFUL HINTS

For beef, there are eight 'primal cuts'. At the top of the animal, starting near the head and going back toward the tail, they are chuck, rib, short loin, sirloin, and round. Underneath the animal, from front to back, they are brisket, plate, and flank. The tenderness or toughness of the cut depends on how much the animal has had to use the muscle. Therefore, cuts near the shoulder or leg, which are used often for movement, are going to be tougher. The muscles that are not used as much, in the center of the animal, include the rib, plate, and loin. These cuts are cooked in different ways to maximize flavor and tenderness.

A big problem with describing cuts of meat is that many butchers and grocers have their own names. For instance, a New York strip steak can also be called a Kansas City steak, Delmonico steak, boneless club steak, and shell steak. If you're unsure about the cut of meat that you're buying, ask the butcher. He or she will be happy to tell you where the cut came from. And as long as the 'primal cut' word is in the name of the cut, you can be pretty sure you know where the meat was located on the animal.

The Components of Meat

Beef is considered 'red meat' because the animal's muscles need so much oxygen as they work keeping the cow upright and moving it around. Myoglobin is the molecule that transports oxygen around the body; it is red in color, therefore the muscles which are used a lot contain a lot of myoglobin and will be deep red.

Protein, Water, Fat, Sugar, and Collagen

* When meat is cooked, protein molecules, which are tightly wound and connected to other molecules, first unwind. This is called 'denaturing', and all it means is that the proteins are relaxing and separating. Because proteins are attracted to each other, they almost immediately pair up with other proteins, forming bundles. This is called 'coagulating' or cooking. As more heat is applied, the bundles of protein shrink. Up to 120

degrees F, the bundles shrink in width. After 120 degrees F, the bundles begin to shrink in length as well.

* Water is also present in the muscles. Some of it is bound up with the proteins, fats, and sugars, and some is 'free water'. The amount of liquid left after the beef is cooked is directly related to the juiciness of the finished dish. As the protein bundles shrink and fat melts in the muscle, water molecules are squeezed out. Not too much water is squeezed out as the protein shrinks in width. But as the temperature increases over 120 degrees F and the bundles become shorter, more and more water is squeezed out and evaporated. That's why a well done piece of beef is so dry. Cooking times and temperatures must be controlled when cooking beef.

* Fat is flavor! A good cut of meat will have specks of white fat evenly distributed through the meat. Leaner cuts of beef, such as flank and round, have less fat and can benefit from marinades and dry rubs.

* Sugar plays an important role in beef, its finished color and flavor. Sugar and protein, when heated in an acid-free environment, combine to form complex molecules in a process called the Maillard Reaction. The wonderful crisp crust with its rich caramel flavors that form on a seared piece of beef are all from the Maillard Reaction. High heat is required for this reaction to occur; grilling and broiling are the best methods. You can also brown meats before cooking to start the Maillard

Reaction, and you can broil roasts at the end of cooking time to achieve the same result.

* Other substances in meat include collagen and elastin. These are present in the hard working muscles of the animal. Collagen will melt as it is heated, turning into gelatin and becoming soft and melty. Elastin can only be broken down physically, as when you pound a cube steak before cooking or grind meat for hamburger. These compounds are found in the brisket, shank, chuck, and round primal cuts; in other words, the beef we cook as pot roasts