



Main Beef Cuts



BACK HOME FARMS

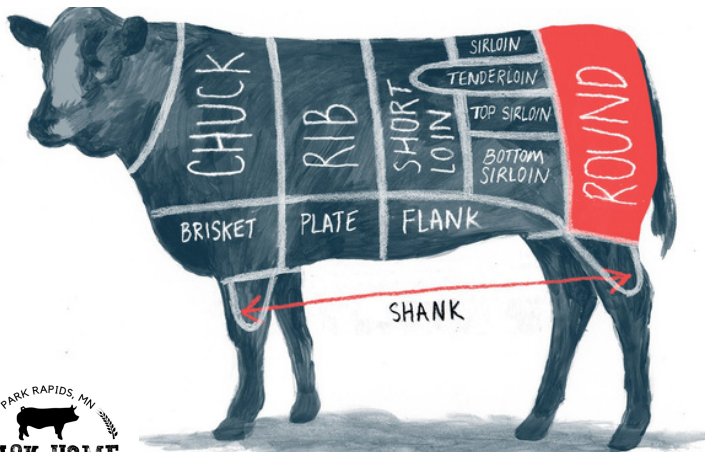
8 DIFFERENT CUTS OF BEEF AND WHERE THEY COME FROM

In the U.S., beef is divided into eight primal cuts.

These primal cuts are the way butchers break beef down into pieces small enough to give you the cuts you find at the store.

Knowing the different parts of the beef can help you make better cooking decisions. From shoulders to hoof they are:

- Chuck (shoulder)
- Brisket (chest)
- Rib
- Plate (belly)
- Loin
- Flank (abdomen)
- Round (back end)
- Shank (thigh)



CHUCK

Chuck comes from the cow's shoulder muscles. It's the largest primal cut.

Since the shoulder muscles do all the work of grazing, the muscle fibers are thick and surrounded by plenty of collagen. These thick fibers can be difficult to chew, but most chuck meat is also very fatty, which makes chuck a flavorful cut.

All of this makes chuck a good choice for braised dishes like beef stew or pot roast, both of which tenderize tough cuts.. A chuck roast is one of my favorite cuts for making french dip sandwiches!



RIB

A cow has 13 ribs, with the first ribs beginning in the chuck section. The rib primal, behind the chuck, comprises ribs six through 12.

This area is less hardworking than the chuck but still full of flavorful (and potentially chewy!) fat.

The beef rib primal cut is used for the traditional standing rib roast (also called prime rib). It's the source of the most sought-after short ribs, ribeye roast and steaks; prime rib roast; and cowboy steak, a bone-in ribeye steak large enough to serve two people. We often have our steaks cut thick enough similar to a cowboy steak.



LOIN

The loin primal begins with the 13th and last rib and is home to some of the tenderest cuts, including the front end of the pricey tenderloin.

This area is typically known as the short loin, and cut into large steaks:

- T-bone Steak: Contains the strip steak and at least ½ inch of the tenderloin joined by the T-shape backbone.
- Porterhouse Steak: A larger version of the T-bone that contains top sirloin and at least 1¼ inches tenderloin. (**This cut is not something we typically carry but could be done as a special order.*)
- Kansas City or New York Strip Steaks: With the tenderloin and bones removed, you're left with the strip loin, usually cut into strip steaks.

It's interesting to note that if the tenderloin is removed, there can be no T-bone or porterhouse steaks. Both of these steaks include a section of the tenderloin muscle.

Beef tenderloin should only be cooked using dry-heat methods, such as grilling and broiling. The meat is already super tender, so long cooking times are unnecessary. Keep it quick and the heat high.



SIRLOIN

Beef sirloin is another large section of the carcass that runs from the 13th rib all the way back to the hip bone and from the backbone clear down to the flank (or belly).

The full sirloin is itself subdivided into top sirloin and bottom sirloin. Top sirloin is generally fabricated into steaks that are good for grilling. Since the sirloin is closer to the rear leg of the animal, the muscles get a bit tougher.

Still, a first-cut sirloin steak—sometimes called a pin-bone steak because it includes a section of the hip bone—is very similar to a porterhouse.

After separating it from the top sirloin, the bottom sirloin is usually divided into three main components: the tri-tip, ball tip, and flap, which do well with roasting and barbecuing (and they are sometimes made into ground beef).



FLANK

The flank primal is located directly under the loin and corresponds to the abdominal muscles.

Cuts from the flank tend to be lean and very tough, but flavorful when properly cooked. Their coarse texture is good for soaking up marinades.

The best technique for flank steak is to grill it quickly at a high temperature. Marinating the meat first can help prevent it from drying out, but avoiding overcooking really is the best prevention. When you're ready to serve it, remember to slice this steak thinly against the grain so it isn't chewy.

Beef flank is also good for braising and it's often used for making ground beef.



PLATE

The plate, aka short plate, is located at the cow's belly, below the rib primal, and can be separated from the rib primal at various points along the rib, depending on the butcher's preference.

- Hanger Steak: Aka butcher's steak, is a thicker cut that hangs from the cow's diaphragm. (**This cut is not something we typically carry but could be done as a special order.*)
- Skirt steak is a thin, flavorful cut located between the abdomen and chest. There are two types of skirt steak —inside skirt and the darker, more mineral-flavored outside skirt. Both skirt steaks are popular for high-heat cooking, such as carne asada, fajitas, and Brazilian barbecue, and should always be sliced against the grain.
- Plate Short Ribs: Cut from ribs six through eight, these are cheaper and more fatty than other beef short ribs and typically sold connected, as a plate.



BRISKET

The brisket, located below the chuck primal and next to the short plate, corresponds to the cow's chest.

Since the muscles in the brisket support the cow's body weight, it's tough and full of connective tissue and fat, requiring prolonged cooking to become tender.

It's braised for Passover, smoked for barbecue in Texas, and can be made into corned beef or pastrami. Brisket is sold whole or divided into two muscles:

- Brisket Flat: Makes up the bulk of the brisket and looks like a flank steak.
- Whole Brisket: Includes both muscles and the layer of fat separating the flat from the point.



ROUND

The round primal covers the backend of the cow: its rump and back legs. The round is lean, inexpensive, and usually fabricated into big roasts. It includes the femur, the longest marrow bone, and often divided into subprimal cuts:

- **Bottom Round:** Aka the gooseneck has more connective tissue than the top round and includes the outside round (flat) and the heel—the toughest cut in the round, which is cut into chip steak, used in Philly cheesesteak.
- **Eye of Round:** Looks like the tenderloin, so it's sometimes sold as faux filet mignon, but has a much less tender texture.
- **Sirloin Tip:** Aka knuckle can be sold as a round roast or cut into textured, chewier steaks.
- **Top Inside Round:** Can be used for beef jerky or cut into so-called London broil steaks.



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