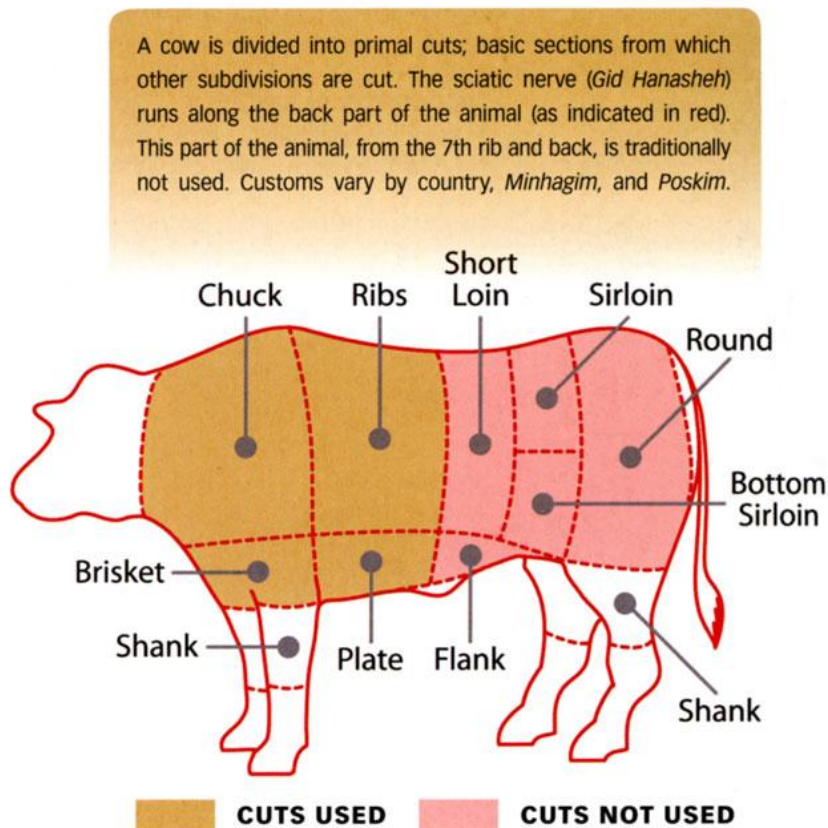


Getting to Know Your Meat¹

Since the time of Avrohom Avinu, when he greeted the angels and offered them the choicest tongue, meat has played a crucial role in Jewish cooking. We have numerous laws with regard to slaughtering and koshering it and Yom Tov meal is not complete without a meat dish. Meat lends importance to any meal and is a crucial component of the joy of Yom Tov.

Now that we have established its importance, we are still faced with a plethora of questions and choices. How do we know which meats are tender and which require more cooking time? What is the difference between prime and choice? And when scanning a menu in a restaurant, how does one differentiate between the endless choices of steaks? Hold on to your steak knife and let's get to the meat of the matter.



How Beef is Graded

Although voluntary, many meat processors choose to participate in the system which is graded by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). Beef is graded based primarily on the prevalence of marbling: the streaks of fat found throughout the meat.

PRIME BEEF has the highest level of marbling, which makes it highest in fat, yet most tender and flavorful. Only 2-3% of beef is awarded this impressive grade, and it's found mostly at high-end restaurants and specialty stores. Because only one out of every 500 cows is given the

prime grade and this number is exponentially reduced for kosher cows, hardly any kosher meat is labeled prime. **CHOICE BEEF** has less marbling than prime, but is still considered superior and has excellent texture and taste. This grade is readily available. **SELECT BEEF** has little marbling, making it tougher and less tasty than choice, but on the upside, lower in fat and less expensive. This grade is widely available.

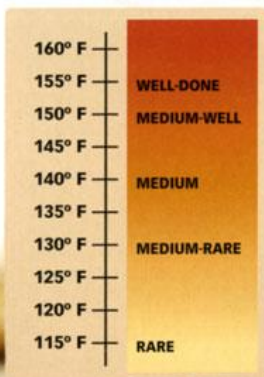
Is it Done Yet?

Temperature, not time, is the best test for doneness. For an accurate and safe method to ensure that your steak is cooked, use a meat thermometer inserted into the side of the steak, reaching as close to the center as possible, without touching the bone (where there is one).



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GUIDE FOR HOW LONG TO COOK MEAT IN MINUTES, WITHOUT THERMOMETER:	
3-4 POUND	36-38 minutes per pound
5-7 POUND	33-35 minutes per pound
8-10 POUNDS	24-30 minutes per pound
11-14 POUNDS	18-22 minutes per pound

THE TENDERNESS of a cut of meat is dependent on numerous factors, such as age (at time of slaughter), marbling and primarily the location it comes from. For example, cuts of meat from areas where the muscles are active, such as the leg (shank) and shoulder (chuck) will always be tougher than those from areas that get less exercise, such as the rib area.



TIPS FOR A SUCCULENT STEAK:

- Bring steak to room temperature by removing from the refrigerator 30 minutes before cooking. It will brown better and cook faster and more evenly.
- Fully preheat your source of heat (grill, skillet, broiler) to the desired temperature. This will help your steak sear better and lock in the juices.
- Pat dry before cooking and wait to season the steak until just before you cook it. If you season it in advance, the salt will draw out some juices.
- Sprinkle kosher salt and cracked black pepper generously to achieve a savory crust.

THE SOFTER THE MEAT, the more you will have to pay for it – but the results will be soft and flavorful with little effort on your part. Conversely, tougher and leaner cuts will be less expensive, but with proper cooking methods even these cuts will soften and yield excellent results.

TENDER CUTS, with little connective tissue (steaks, ribs), respond well to dry heat cooking such as pan searing, grilling or broiling. Tougher cuts respond best when cooked for a long time by means of braising, simmering and stewing.

BRAISING is a combination of moist and dry heat. The meat is first seared at a high temperature and then simmered in liquid in a closed container. The primary goal of braising is to melt the collagen in the connective tissue, transforming a tough piece of meat into a tender one.

Meat Guide

ROAST: A cut of beef thicker than two inches that is suitable for cooking by dry or moist heat

NAME	A.K.A.	PART OF ANIMAL	INFO	HOW TO COOK	STEAK CALLED
Chuck Roast \$\$	Pot Roast	Chuck	Tough, yet flavorful, sometimes fatty	Moist heat cooking, simmer a long time	Chuck Eye Steak
Chuck Eye Roast \$\$	Kalachel, Moch Tender, Netted Chuck Roast	Chuck	Flavorful; more tender than chuck roast	Moist heat cooking	
Minute Roast \$\$+		Chuck	Soft and tender. Has vein running in the center, ask butcher to devein.	Moist heat cooking	Minute Steak / Swiss Steak
Silver Tip Roast \$\$\$	Roast Beef, End of Shoulder Roast	Chuck	Tougher than French Roast, yet flavorful	Moist heat cooking. Do not overcook. For roast beef, cook dry, uncovered.	
French Roast \$\$\$+	Square cut, Thick London Broil, Brick Roast	Chuck	Slightly stringy texture, but most tender cut of chuck	Moist heat cooking	Strip Steak
London Broil \$\$\$	Each butcher/chef has their own version	Chuck	Usually a larger cut of moch tender	Marinade, flash grill and then slice	
Rib Roast \$\$\$\$+	Prime Rib, Rib Eye Roast	Rib	Premium cut, extremely tender with excellent flavor	Dry heat cooking; sear outside and then bake uncovered.	Rib Steak, Rib Eye Steak, Delmonico Steak
Standing Rib Roast \$\$\$\$+		Rib	Premium cut, like the rib roast but with the bones	Dry heat cooking	

STEAK: Any meat which is cut across the muscle into a thick slice with or without the bone. The word steak is only applied to beef.

NAME	A.K.A.	PART OF ANIMAL	INFO	HOW TO COOK
Chuck Steak \$	Chuck Eye Steak	Chuck	Very tough	Moist heat cooking
Minute Steak \$\$	Swiss Steak	Chuck	Cut from minute roast	Moist heat cooking
Club Steak \$\$\$		Chuck	Between chuck and rib; more tender than chuck, less tender than rib	Dry heat cooking
Strip Steak \$\$\$	California, Kansas city strip	Chuck	Cut from French roast	Dry heat cooking
Rib Steak \$\$\$\$		Rib	Cut from rib roast with the bone	Dry heat cooking
Rib Eye Steak \$\$\$\$		Rib	Cut from rib roast without the bone	Dry heat cooking
Delmonico Steak \$\$\$\$	Rib Steak	Rib	Double the thickness of rib steak; can be ordered with or without the bone	Dry heat cooking
Filet Mignon \$\$\$\$+	Center of Rib Eye Steak	Rib	Most tender steak, as it is the center of the rib eye	Dry heat cooking
Hangar Steak \$\$\$+	Bistro Steak, Butchers Steak	Plate	Long thin fibers, similar to skirt steak, but more tender; excellent flavor	Dry heat cooking – do not overcook.
Skirt Steak \$\$\$+	Churascuro, Philadelphia Steak	Plate	Long thin fibers, tough, salty. Soak to remove salt. Excellent flavor.	Grill or braise

BRISKET: A primal cut, whose meat is on the tougher side. Yet, with slow cooking will soften considerably.

NAME	A.K.A.	INFO	HOW TO COOK
First Cut Brisket \$\$\$	Flat Cut	Lean cut	Moist heat cooking on low heat for a long time
Second Cut Brisket \$\$	Point Cut	Fattier than first cut	Moist heat cooking on low heat for a long time
Whole Brisket \$\$		First and second cut combined	Moist heat cooking on low heat for a long time
Pickled Brisket \$\$\$	Cured brisket	Any part of the brisket that has been pickled. Corned beef and pastrami are made from pickled brisket.	Boil in pot and then serve with a glaze

OTHER CUTS OF MEAT: A primal cut, whose meat is on the tougher side. Yet, with slow cooking will soften considerably.

NAME	A.K.A.	PART OF ANIMAL	INFO	HOW TO COOK
Ground Beef	Chopped Meat	Any part of the cow	The choicest ground beef is 100% chuck	Use in hamburgers / meatballs
Pepper Steak	Swiss Steak	Little strips from all over the cow	Tough, cheap	Braise
Short Ribs	Spare Ribs / Flanken	Bottom of ribs / near the plate		Braise / use in cholent
Stew Meat		Neck	Tough	Use in stews

LAMB: The meat of sheep. Its meat is very tender.

NAME	INFO
Breast	Lean cut
Lamb Chops	Individual rib with meat attached. Pan sear.
Rack of Lamb	All ribs with meat attached

¹ The Bais Yaakov Cookbook: Published by The Fund for Jewish Education, pages 360-363.