

**VOLUME 2 ... BREAKING DOWN THE BEEF**

**Funny story:** We recently took a small poll amongst friends composed of two questions: “What do you think is the best cut of beef? And why?” The answers varied from striploin to tenderloin, from ribeye to filet mignon (i.e. tenderloin, but in French), and we even had a flank steak thrown in for good measure. The “why’s” also varied from taste to texture, with tenderness winning the popularity vote... By far the best response was from one of the filet mignon guys who responded “because it’s French.” Of course... why else!

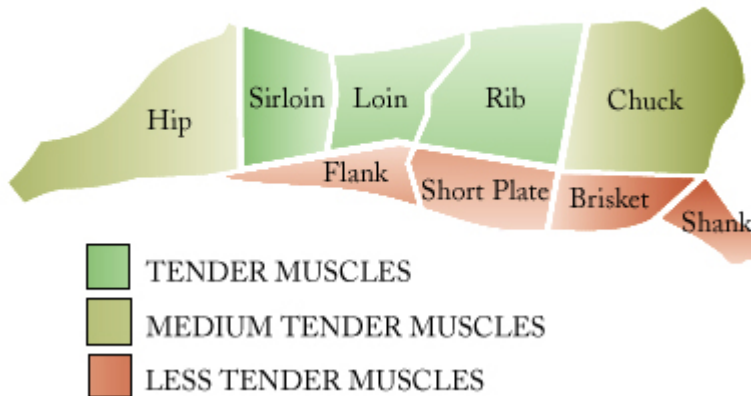
It’s pretty ironic, really. For most of us, beef in one form or another is a staple in our diets; yet few of us understand the various cuts. The typical grocery store, with it’s pre-plastic wrapped packages and confusing computer printed labels does very little to help. So, without further ado, in this month’s edition of *Live to Eat* we’re breaking down a beef; in a future issue, we’ll tackle pork and poultry.

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**First and foremost, understand that beef is muscle tissue.** As a result, regularly used muscles will result in tougher meat, while lesser used muscles will result in tender meat. This doesn’t mean that the less tender cuts aren’t worth eating – au contraire – some of the tastiest cuts come from the tougher muscles. However, the rule is that tougher meat requires slow, moist cooking methods (such as braising, boiling and stewing); such cooking techniques loosen connective tissue creating tender, juicy, and tasty meat. On the other hand, the more tender meat can be cooked with dry heat methods (such as grilling, roasting, and broiling). Our web page explains the various cooking methods, so if you wish to learn more, visit our [Cooking Guide](#) page.

**A BREAKDOWN OF BEEF PRIMAL CUTS**  
by The Healthy Butcher



Starting from the front, the chuck, brisket, and shank are generally the most exercised muscles and hence, among the toughest cuts. From these parts we get meat for pot roasts, stews and ground beef. The infamous corned beef comes from boiled brisket meat – remember that next time you find yourself savouring a corned beef sandwich in your favourite deli.

### Boned & Tied Rib Roast

Moving along, the Rib, Loin and Sirloin render the most delicate cuts of beef. Rib eye steaks come from, you guessed it, the rib section. A prime rib roast is the most flavourful and most expensive roast of beef. The Loin produces the popular T-bones, porterhouses, striploins (a.k.a. New York Strips), and tenderloins (a.k.a. Filet Mignon, Chateaubriand, Tournedos, Medallions, or Filet de Boeuf). Finally, the sirloin provides a variety of steaks differing by where in the sirloin they are cut, such as bottom sirloin, tri-tip and top sirloin grilling steaks. Generally speaking, gourmets and gourmands consider striploin the tastiest cut. Tenderloin is more tender, but it lacks the flavour intensity – hence the concept of wrapping a filet mignon in bacon.



T-Bone



**Aside:** There are two cutting methods when it comes to the Loin – one method will produce the full tenderloin along with strip steaks, the other will produce steaks that contain both portions of the tenderloin and the striploin, namely T-Bones and Porterhouse steaks. These prestigious steaks we are so used to seeing on steak house menus are almost never seen in Europe because European butchers only cut the loin in the method that produces full tenderloins. The rib steak, however, is the same all over – in France it is called entrecote, and in Italy it is costata or contracoste. In Florence, rib steak is the meat for the famous Bistecca Fiorentina.

Bone-in Rib Steak



The hip (usually called the round) includes the sirloin tip, eye of round, outside round (bottom round), and inside round (top round). The round is the leanest part of the beef and has more meat without tendons than any other part of the animal. The sirloin tip and the inside round have the finest-textured meat on the round.

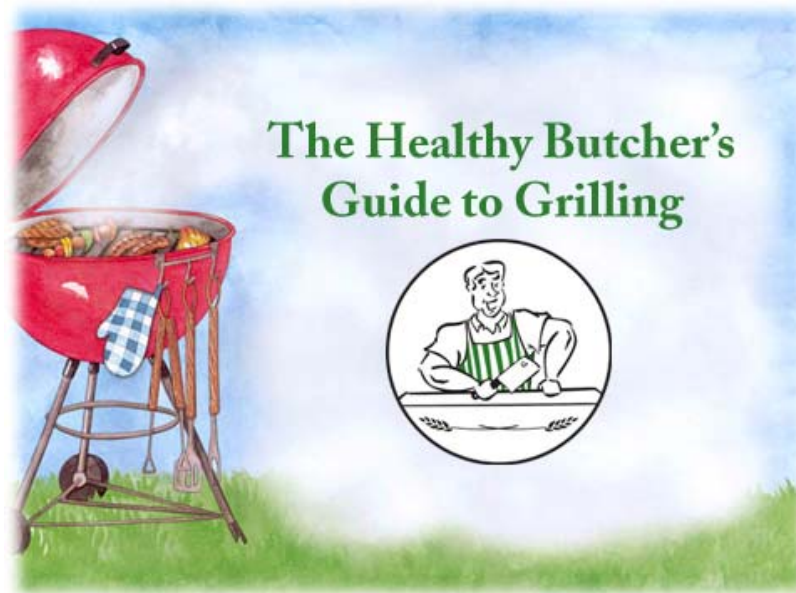
Last, but not least, we arrive at the flank and short plate. The muscle fibers are relatively coarse but contain sufficient intramuscular fat to maintain a little tenderness. Skirt steak (from the plate) and flank steak are delicious when grilled. However, they must not be overcooked, benefit from being slowly marinated, and should be cut against the grain for a softer texture. Mexican fajitas are often made from marinated strips of flank steak.

So there you have it! Beef demystified in one page!

Common Cuts	Location	Tenderness
Brisket Pot Roast Boneless	Brisket	Less Tender
Top Blade Pot Roast	Chuck	Medium Tender
Shoulder Clod	Chuck	Less Tender
Skirt Steak Outer	Flank	Less Tender
Skirt Steak Outer		
Flank Steak		
Inside Round Marinating Steak	Hip	Medium Tender
Outside Round Flat Roast	Hip	Medium Tender
Rump Oven Roast	Hip	Medium Tender

Tenderloin Steak or Roast	Loin	Tender
Striploin Steak	Loin	Tender
T-Bone Steak / Porterhouse Steak	Loin	Tender
Short Ribs	Plate	Less Tender
Rib Eye Steak	Rib	Tender
Prime Rib Roast	Rib	Tender
Butt Tenderloin	Sirloin	Tender
Bottom Sirloin	Sirloin	Tender
Top Sirloin	Sirloin	Tender

In next month's *live to eat* newsletter...



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