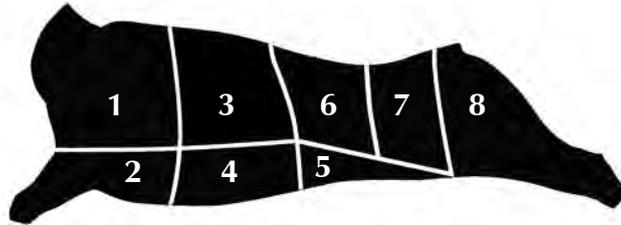


# Beef Cuts by Primal

A beef carcass is first divided into eight large sections, known as primals. These are then cut into individual roasts or steaks, depending on customer preference. The following pages explain which cuts are available from each of the following eight primals:

1. Chuck
2. Brisket and Shank
3. Rib
4. Short Plate
5. Flank
6. Short Loin
7. Sirloin
8. Round



*NOTE: Other less common beef cuts may be available in addition to those listed on the following pages. Talk with the farmer/rancher or butcher about processing and packaging options, such as the number of steaks you want per package.*



7-bone pot roast



Arm roast



Blade steak



Stew meat



Short ribs

## Chuck



The beef chuck primal is the animal's shoulder and accounts for approximately 26 percent of the carcass weight. This section contains a portion of the backbone, five rib bones and portions of the blade and arm bones. Because an animal constantly uses these shoulder muscles, the chuck contains a high percentage of connective tissue, resulting in less tender but very flavorful meat. Chuck and other working-muscle cuts cook well with moist-heat cooking such as stewing and braising.



Brisket



Cross-cut foreshank

## Brisket and Shank



The brisket (breast) and foreshank (front leg) form a single primal that accounts for approximately 10 percent of the carcass weight. The boneless brisket is well suited for moist-heat methods of cooking, such as simmering or braising. It may be pickled or corned to produce corned beef brisket, or cured and peppered to make pastrami. Cross-cut foreshank is very flavorful and high in collagen, which converts to gelatin when cooked using moist heat. It makes excellent soup stock.



Ribeye roast (prime rib)



Ribeye steak



Ribs

## Rib



The beef rib primal accounts for approximately 10 percent of the carcass weight and is best known for yielding prime rib roast, also called rib roast. *(NOTE: Prime rib is not named for the quality grade “USDA Prime.”)* The ribeye muscle (the center muscle) provides structural support, rather than mobility, and is therefore quite tender. It also contains large amounts of marbling compared to the rest of the carcass and produces rich, full-flavored roasts and steaks. Although roasting the ribeye muscle on the rib bones produces a moister roast, the bones can be removed to produce a boneless ribeye roast. Ribs are meaty, flavorful bones separated from the ribeye meat and are often served as barbecued beef ribs. Rib meat may also be ground.



Flank steak



Skirt steak



Ground

## Short Plate and Flank



The short plate and flank, located directly beneath the rib and sirloin, account for approximately 10 percent of the overall weight of the carcass. The flank steak is meaty yet high in connective tissue and is best marinated, and grilled or broiled, cooked to medium-rare. Skirt steak is often marinated and grilled for slicing, as for fajitas. Other less meaty portions of the short plate are typically trimmed and ground.



Tenderloin roast



Tenderloin steaks



Porterhouse steak



New York strip steak

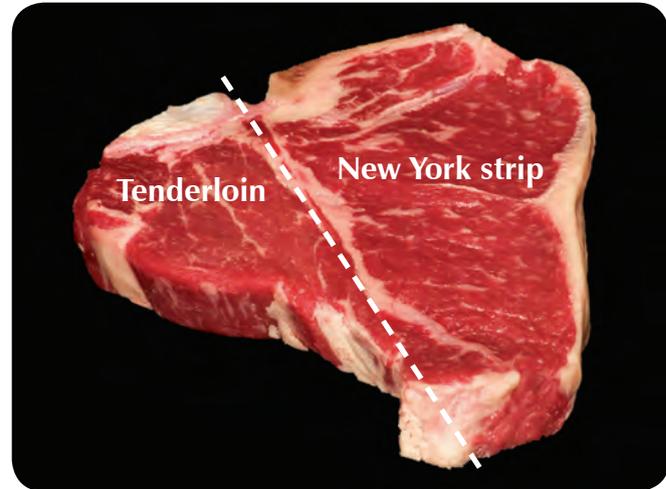
## Short Loin



The short loin is the front portion of the beef loin, located just behind the rib. It accounts for approximately 8 percent of the carcass weight and yields many of the most tender and expensive cuts of beef. The short loin also provides a great example of the give and take inherent in cut selection. Steaks from this primal are interrelated: The tenderloin is the most tender cut and is sometimes removed whole or cut separately into tenderloin steaks (filet mignon). However, Porterhouse and T-bone steaks include both a New York strip (on one side of the “T”) and a portion of tenderloin (on the other side). Removing the tenderloin rules out the cutting of T-bone and Porterhouse steaks.

Likewise, if you choose to process as many T-bone steaks as possible, there won't be meat left for New York strip steaks. Understanding this interrelation is an important step in knowing and using the whole animal. Cut choices from this primal include:

- The tenderloin is the most tender cut of all. It lies beneath the loin eye muscle, under the backbone, and is exceptionally tender because it is exercised very little.
- T-bone steaks are produced when the short loin cut is cut in cross-sections with the bone in. It contains a New York strip on one side of the "T" and a small portion of tenderloin on the other.
- New York strip steaks (a.k.a. boneless top loin steaks) are from the loin eye muscle—a continuation of the rib eye muscle, running along the top of the T-shaped bones that form the backbone.
- Porterhouse steaks are cut like a T-bone from farther back on the short loin, which ensures that it contains a larger portion of tenderloin on one side of the "T" backbone.





Top sirloin steak



Sirloin tip roast / Round tip roast

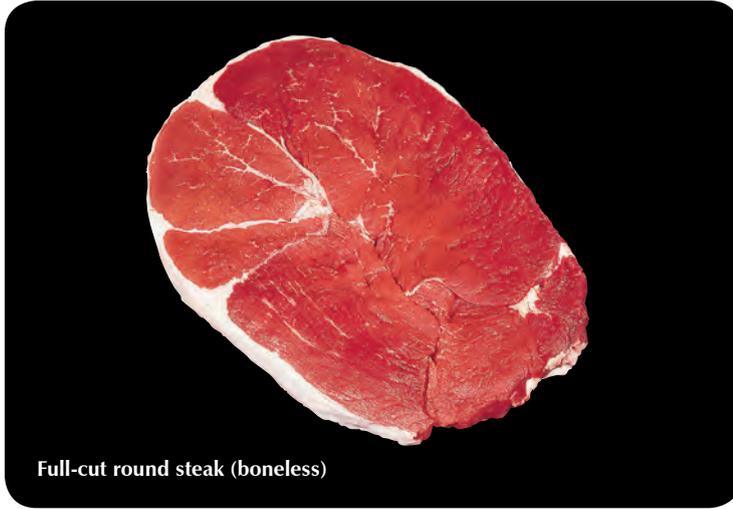


Tri-tip roast

## Sirloin



The sirloin, located between the short loin and the round, accounts for approximately 9 percent of the carcass weight and contains part of the back-bone as well as part of the hipbone. This primal produces flavorful and tender bone-in or boneless roasts and steaks. With the exception of the tenderloin portion, these cuts are not as tender as those from the short loin. Sirloin tip steaks and roasts have several names such as “round tip steak” and roast or just “tip steak” and roast. These are flavorful but less tender cuts. Top sirloin steaks or roasts are traditional, meaty cuts. Sirloin cuts do best with dry-heat



Full-cut round steak (boneless)



Top round steak



Bottom round steaks



Round rump roast (boneless)



Eye round roast

## Round



The round is very large, accounting for approximately 27 percent of the carcass weight. Meat from the round—the hind leg of the animal—is flavorful and lean. Steaks from the round can be marinated and grilled or braised (like Swiss steak). Round roasts should be cooked with moist heat. Round steak is cut on average 3/4 inch thick. Other cuts from this primal include minute steak (a round steak cut into smaller portions and tenderized) that can be used for chicken-fried steak; dried beef, usually thin-sliced and fully cured; and hindshank, a very flavorful cut that makes excellent soup stock. In the round, you cannot get full cut round steaks **and** top, eye, and bottom round steaks. They are from the same muscles.

# Ground and Variety Meats



## Ground

The “trim,” or meat and fat trimmed from the individual cuts listed on the previous pages, is blended into ground beef. The resulting composite usually ranges from 70 percent lean to more than 90 percent lean. Leaner beef will taste drier and overcook more easily. Less lean beef will contain more fat. Most people prefer 80 or 85 percent lean for burgers and meatloaf. The leaner you order your ground beef the less you will get, because there is less fat in it. Some processors can make various processed products out of beef trim, such as frankfurters, bologna, and snack sticks. Be sure to ask.

## Variety Meats

Variety meats include the heart, kidney, tongue, tripe (stomach lining) and oxtail. Many of these are considered delicacies when properly prepared. No idea what to do with them? Non-organ variety meat is generally best prepared with moist-heat and is often used in soup, stew, or braised dishes. Organs, such as heart and liver, are good sliced and fried. Celebrated British chef Fergus Henderson has written an entire cookbook dedicated to these tasty bits, *The Whole Beast: Nose to Tail Eating*.