

COOK'S
ILLUSTRATED

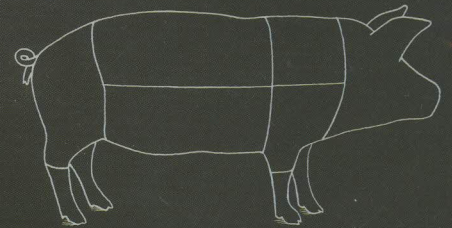
MEAT

illustrated



**A FOOLPROOF
GUIDE**

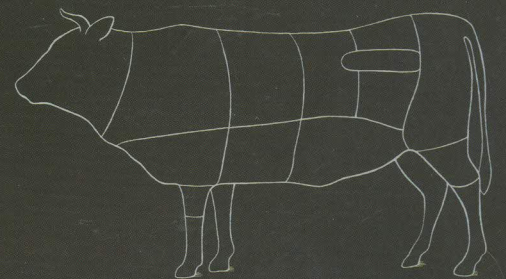
to Understanding
and Cooking with
Cuts of All Kinds



Increase Your Meat
Counter Confidence

**350+
RECIPES FOR**

Beef, Pork,
Lamb, and Veal



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ห้องสมุดสาขาโชติเวช



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welcome to AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN

This book has been tested, written, and edited by the folks at America's Test Kitchen, where curious cooks become confident cooks. Located in Boston's Seaport District in the historic Innovation and Design Building, it features 15,000 square feet of kitchen space including multiple photography and video studios. It is the home of *Cook's Illustrated* magazine and *Cook's Country* magazine and is the workday destination for more than 60 test cooks, editors, and cookware specialists. Our mission is to empower and inspire confidence, community, and creativity in the kitchen.


We start the process of testing a recipe with a complete lack of preconceptions, which means that we accept no claim, no technique, and no recipe at face value. We simply assemble as many variations as possible, test a half-dozen of the most promising, and taste the results blind. We then construct our own recipe and continue to test it, varying ingredients, techniques, and cooking times until we reach a consensus. As we like to say in the test kitchen, "We make the mistakes so you don't have to." The result, we hope, is the best version of a particular recipe, but we realize that only you can be the final judge of our success (or failure). We use the same rigorous approach when we test equipment and taste ingredients.

All of this would not be possible without a belief that good cooking, much like good music, is based on a foundation of objective technique. Some people like spicy foods and others don't, but there is a right way to sauté, there is a best way to cook a pot roast, and there are measurable scientific principles involved in producing perfectly beaten, stable egg whites. Our ultimate goal is to investigate the fundamental principles of cooking to give you the techniques, tools, and ingredients you need to become a better cook. It is as simple as that.

To see what goes on behind the scenes at *America's Test Kitchen*, check out our social media channels for kitchen snapshots, exclusive content, video tips, and much more. You can watch us work (in our actual test kitchen) by tuning in to America's Test Kitchen or *Cook's Country* on public television or on our websites. Download our award-winning podcast Proof, which goes beyond recipes to solve food mysteries (AmericasTestKitchen.com/proof), or listen to test kitchen experts on public radio (SplendidTable.org) to hear insights that illuminate the truth about real home cooking. Want to hone your cooking skills or finally learn how to bake—with an America's Test Kitchen test cook? Enroll in one of our online cooking classes. And you can engage the next generation of home cooks with kid-tested recipes from America's Test Kitchen Kids.

Our community of home recipe testers provides valuable feedback on recipes under development by ensuring that they are foolproof. You can help us investigate the how and why behind successful recipes from your home kitchen. (Sign up at AmericasTestKitchen.com/recipe_testing.)

However you choose to visit us, we welcome you into our kitchen, where you can stand by our side as we test our way to the best recipes in America.

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introduction



MEAT OF ANY KIND, whether a weeknight-friendly pork tenderloin roast or a prized special-occasion prime rib, a thick-cut veal chop or a hearty lamb burger, is a special kind of luxury, a privilege to eat, even if you eat it every day. It's also a nourishing gift, one that provides protein and essential nutrients. But because many of us eat meat routinely, this is easy to forget. There's a lot that goes into bringing meat from pasture (or elsewhere) to your plate. Breeds of animals are many, raising styles vary and affect the animal's taste and texture, wholesalers separate sides of meat into large primal cuts, butchers break large cuts down into smaller retail cuts, and, finally, you bring cuts home and cook them.

The very last step is where we come in: We develop foolproof recipes. You can be certain we'll reliably teach you the best way to cook meat—beef, veal, pork, lamb, and ground meat. But we want to shed light on the importance of the preceding steps. And so this isn't just a cookbook, it's also an invaluable handbook filled with detailed hand-drawn illustrations and organized by animal. For each animal, we present its primal cuts and hierarchy of retail cuts—roasts, steaks, and chops—along with the facts you need to make informed cooking decisions. Chuck roast, you'll find, is cut from the cow's shoulder and is tougher because the muscles are actively used for movement, so you'll want to cook it low and slow to tenderize. Lamb loin and rib chops can be used interchangeably (pan-sear or grill them) so you can improvise. Learn (and view) cut-specific techniques like trimming a rack of lamb to reduce its slightly gamy-tasting fat, or properly carving an unwieldy country ham.

Looking to branch out from the cuts you're used to? Have a new butcher shop in the neighborhood, or curious about a new cut in the case? This approach helps you grasp the must-know methods for your favorite cuts but also gives you the opportunity to read about new-to-you cuts so you're empowered to take advantage of the wide range of options that might look good wherever you're shopping. Cook what your eyes are drawn to—maybe the marbling on a big porterhouse looks particularly abundant one day, or your butcher just started displaying a blade-end pork loin roast next to the center-cut one—not just familiar standbys, like workaday steak tips and boneless pork chops. Become a confident carnivore, cooking up whatever appeals with ease.

If you are giving a cut a try for the first time, you'll be comforted to know it will come out perfectly, because each cut in this book is followed by recipes that cover every technique appropriate for it. The entry for flank steak, for example, will share that it takes well to pan searing, stir-frying, and grilling, and even braising. You'll find recipes for each cooking method, with Pan-Seared Flank Steak with Mustard-Chive Butter (page 166), Beef Stir-Fry with Bell Peppers and Black Pepper Sauce (page 169), Grilled Beef Satay (page 175), and Arrachera en Adobo (page 168), respectively.

A cut of meat is often a center-of-the-plate star, and we make it shine in satisfying recipes like Butter-Basted Rib Steak (page 69), where we spoon hot butter on the steaks from both sides so they come to temperature as they acquire a deep crust; meltingly tender Chinese Barbecue Roast Pork Shoulder (page 220), cooked for 6 hours so the collagen melts to lubricate the meat; and the quintessential Crumb-Crusted Rack of Lamb (page 342), spread with mustard so the crumbs adhere.

Meat can also have an impact when it doesn't sit in the middle of the plate and instead is an equal part of a whole meal. Vibrant dishes benefit from large and small additions of meat, sometimes for richness or savor rather than for bulk. We bring meat beyond centerpiece status with complete meals: Shake up surf and turf with Fried Brown Rice with Pork and Shrimp (page 258). Braise lamb shoulder chops in a Libyan-style chickpea and orzo soup called Sharba (page 337). Lemongrass Beef and Rice Noodles (page 154) is a fresh-tasting meal in a bowl, full of pleasing textures. An Italian pork, fennel, and lemon ragu (see page 228) coats ribbons of pappardelle surprisingly delicately. Egyptian Eggah with Ground Beef and Spinach (page 380) features bountiful spinach and leeks and spiced ground beef in a thick egg omelet.

Meat Illustrated has the answer to any kind of meat, manner of cooking, or style of recipe you prefer. Butchering is a craft; we hope this book does justice to the cuts that come from it, making cooking and eating meat more memorable, and more special.

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Recipe List by Cut

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- *good substitute for chuck-eye roast

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- *good substitute for chuck-eye roast

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*substitute for flat-cut brisket

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*we cut them from pork butt roast

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*substitute for shank-end fresh ham

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Meat Must-Knows

The four parts of this book break down the specifics for beef and veal, pork, and lamb cuts, and ground meat. But there are universal purchasing, prepping, and cooking steps. We cover those here.

BREAKING AN ANIMAL INTO CUTS

Animals are divided into large primal cuts (the shoulder of lamb or the rib of a cow, for example) at wholesale. These are the ones you see outlined in most animal drawings including our own, which are then cut into the smaller roasts (sometimes called sub-primals) and even smaller steaks and chops that we buy at retail. (For more information on butchery, see page 30.) This nomenclature is widely accepted but we use it more loosely in this book because it's less applicable in the home kitchen than it is at a slaughterhouse or butcher shop. Some cuts straddle two primals and don't fit neatly in a category (beef tenderloin, a favorite of many, for example, spans the short loin and the sirloin of the cow). Some don't make sense to discuss in culinary terms at the same time: A lamb shank cooks a lot differently than the leg to which it's attached. We're here to teach you about specific cuts you can commonly find and how best to cook them, so that's how we've organized the sections within chapters.

Each section opens with universal information about the larger wholesale cut and then follows with specifics about the roasts and steaks that come from there. Recipes that follow are tagged with the cut they call for. You can also refer to the chart beginning on page 2 to see recipes organized by cut so you know exactly where to go in the book once you come home with what looked good at the market.

PURCHASING AND STORING

The sections on beef, veal, pork, and lamb each tell you how to choose high-quality cuts, but there are also general shopping and storing tips to take to the market with you.

Pay Attention to Temperature

When you're picking meat from a case, you might have an eye on the cleanliness of the surroundings, but temperature is important, too. Is the packaging cool to the touch? Even at the farmers' market, meat should be stored under 40 degrees. On especially hot days, take advantage of your market's insulated shopping bags (or bring an insulated cooler bag—the type used to keep lunches cool). Of course, you can also keep a cooler in the trunk of your car. If you have a lot of items on your grocery list, make the meat counter one of your last stops, so the meat stays cooler until you can get it home.

Looks Matter

Meat should look moist but not sodden. For example, an excessive amount of juices inside a meat package, also called purge, can be an indication that the meat has been on the shelf for too long. As for color, red meat will appear mahogany or purplish when butchered but the flesh will turn bright red or pink once exposed to oxygen. Meat that has turned brown all the way through is on its way to spoiling. Avoid meat that has green spots—this is an indication of spoilage and bacteria. Note that shrink-wrapped cuts may be of varying sizes and thicknesses, which will have an adverse effect on cooking times. If possible, buy parts individually to make sure they're of similar size and thus cook through at the same rate.

Fat Is Flavor

Streaks of white throughout meat, especially beef, are an indication of marbling. The marbling is fat and adds flavor to meat. Don't confuse marbling with gristle. Gristle, which is often translucent rather than white, is connective tissue and does not break down upon cooking. Avoid cuts with visible gristle when possible. Note that some exterior fat is good, especially when selecting roasts. In the oven or on the grill, this fat will melt and flavor the meat. This is especially important when selecting relatively lean cuts like pork loin or beef brisket. However, excessive exterior fat will need to be trimmed, and since you're buying meat by the pound, more than ½ inch of exterior fat is generally too much.

Your Nose Knows

You know how fresh fish shouldn't smell overtly fishy? The same goes for meat. Truly fresh meat should have little aroma. Any strong off or sour odors indicate spoilage.

Meat Label Mastery

Does "pasture-raised" mean that the beef you're buying came from a cow that spent its days roaming a bucolic field? That may not be the case. Here are labeling terms that require explanation.

PASTURE-RAISED

The term "pasture-raised" is not regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is not clearly defined in the industry. (The animals' access to a pasture may be very limited.) Geography may affect pasture raising; animals in colder climates might spend less time in the pasture than those in more temperate areas. A "pasture-raised" label can be an indication of quality, but to be sure, you should ask the producer how they define the term.

NO HORMONES AND NO ANTIBIOTICS

Beef may be labeled “no hormones administered” if the producer can provide documentation proving that the animal wasn’t raised with hormones. The USDA prohibits all use of hormones (and steroids) with pork, so it technically doesn’t require a label. The agency requires that if a “no hormones” label is used, it must be followed by the statement, “Federal regulations prohibit the use of hormones.” In short, the label is an empty reassurance since the practice is prohibited for pork anyway. Similarly, it is not industry standard to use hormones on lamb. Like the “no hormones” label, the term “no antibiotics” can be applied if the producer provides documentation that the animal was not raised with antibiotics. This is useful for beef, pork, veal, and lamb (antibiotics can be administered to all four).

NATURAL

“Natural” simply means that the meat was minimally processed and contains no artificial ingredients. The USDA defines minimally processed meat as meat “processed in a manner that does not fundamentally alter the product.” Our advice is to stick to buying your meat fresh if possible and skip the frozen food aisle; there’s probably not much that’s natural about frozen sliced sandwich “steak,” burger patties, and bags of frozen meatballs.

ORGANIC

In contrast to “natural,” the USDA’s definition of “organic” is a bit more involved: Organic food is produced by farmers who emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future generations. Organic meat comes from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones. Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides; fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge; bioengineering; or ionizing radiation. Before a product can be labeled “organic,” a government-approved certifier inspects the farm where the food is grown to make sure the farmer is following all the rules necessary to meet USDA organic standards. A farm must use organic processes for three years before it can become accredited.

Buy Bone-In or Boneless?

We see value in both bone-in and boneless cuts depending on how much effort you want to put into preparing, how long you’re willing to wait for something to cook, and what you plan to do with the end result. We call for boneless meat often. However, it’s true that bone-in meat tastes meatier. As bones are heated, they expel moisture, salt, amino acids, and nucleotides from the richly flavored marrow. Since those water-soluble flavor molecules must penetrate through a thick layer of bone to reach the meat, the diffusion process is slow and the amount of flavor contributed is not enormous—but it is detectable. When coupled with the considerable moisture- and flavor-enhancing benefits of the fat and connective tissue around the bones, the process certainly provides another good reason to opt for bone-in cuts of meat if you have the option in a recipe.

Keep It Cold

Meat should be refrigerated promptly after purchase and can remain refrigerated before cooking for up to three days. Smoked and cured products store for two weeks once opened, and ground meat, defrosted cuts, and cooked meat store for two days. A refrigerator thermometer will tell you if your fridge and freezer are working properly. Check the temperature of your refrigerator regularly to ensure that it is between 35 and 40 degrees; your freezer should be below zero degrees.

Keep in mind that the back of a refrigerator is the coldest, while the door is the least cold. Make sure that raw meat is stored well wrapped and never on shelves that are above other food, especially when thawing.

As for freezing meat, in general, meat tastes best if you’ve never frozen it. The slow process of freezing that occurs in a home freezer (as compared with a commercial freezer) causes large ice crystals to form. The crystals rupture the cell walls of the meat, permitting the release of juices during cooking. That said, if you’re going to freeze meat, we’ve found that the best method is to remove it from its packaging, vacuum-seal it or wrap it well in plastic, and then place the meat in a zipper-lock bag and squeeze out excess air. If the cuts are small, like steaks or chops, we like to freeze them, uncovered, overnight on a baking sheet (this dries them out to prevent crystallization) before wrapping them tightly in plastic wrap and placing them in the zipper-lock bag. Meat can remain frozen for up to one month before cooking; however, if you own and use a vacuum sealer, you can store it for about three months.

A way to level-up freezing: Quick-chill the meat before placing it in the freezer. Why? The faster the meat freezes the smaller the ice crystals that form. We quick-chill items by using an ice bath with added salt. This works wonders for cuts like steaks, pork chops, or small roasts like tenderloins. Combine 1 cup of ice, 1 pound of salt, and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of water in a container. This is enough mixture to chill four steaks or chops. Wrap the meat in plastic wrap, place the pieces in a zipper-lock bag, and submerge the bag in the ice bath. Once the meat is frozen solid, remove the bag from the ice bath and transfer it to the freezer.

To prevent the growth of harmful bacteria when thawing frozen meat, we defrost thicker (1 inch or greater) cuts in the refrigerator and place thinner cuts on a heavy cast-iron or steel pan at room temperature; the metal’s rapid heat transfer safely thaws the meat in about an hour. Have even less time? Soak cuts such as chops, steaks, and cutlets in hot water. Simply seal steaks or chops in zipper-lock bags and submerge the packages in very hot (140-degree) water. Cuts will take roughly 12 minutes to thaw, which is fast enough that the rate of bacterial growth falls into the “safe” category, and the meat doesn’t start to cook. (Large roasts are not suitable for hot thawing.)

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" สำหรับเพื่อการศึกษาระดับปริญญาและอ้างอิงเท่านั้น "