Know Your Steaks!

Nino's Steak Buying Guide

Whether you're looking for that AWESOME Porterhouse Steak for grilling on the back deck or you just want to be sure you're buying the right steak for making Fajitas, we want to make your selection with knowledge and confidence.

This guide reviews the most common cuts of beef used for steaks and gives you information about their flavor, tenderness and presentation.

Additional information about the proper seasoning and cooking of your steaks including our **Grilling Guide** and our **Marinates and Rubs** flyer can be found in our store's meat departments or on line at www.ninosalvaggio.com.

To begin, Nino's steaks are all freshly hand cut, right in our store, 7 days a week. We pride ourselves on providing quality and value and specialize in customer service, which is why our business is brisk. That in turn, keeps our butchers busy, our inventory moving and assures you of the freshest cuts of meat.

Having **"real"** butchers in house also gives us the opportunity to offer our customers custom cut steaks, like 3 inch thick **Rib Eyes**, whole **Beef Tenderloins** trimmed to order and whole **New York Strips** cut into steaks of your choosing. And of course, we're always available to answer your questions.

Steak Basics

- Choose the right steak for the job. The most tender cuts aren't always the most flavorful and vice versa. Review our list of steaks and comments to help you decide which one is right for you.
- Fat is your friend. Fat contains essential salts and more importantly, contributes to a moist, flavorful and more tender steak. Look for small specs of fat evenly distributed throughout the steak on the more tender cuts and approximately 1/4" of fat covering on steaks such as Porterhouse, T-Bone and New York Strips.
- If you like your steaks Rare to Medium Rare, choose a steak that is at least 1 inch thick so you will be able to enjoy a flavorful "crust" while still enjoying a juicy steak to your preferred doneness.

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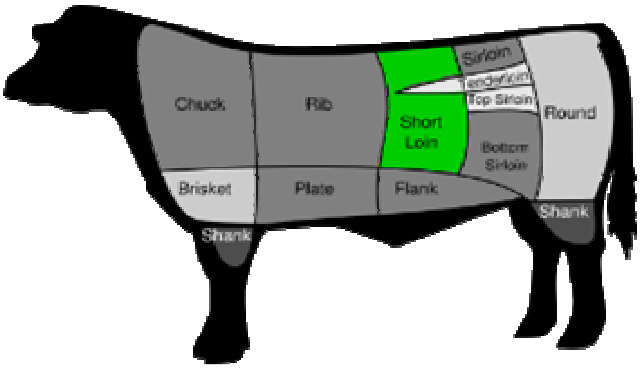
Your Choice? Heads or Tails?



Fillet Mignon (Beef Tenderloin or Chateaubriand Tournedos) A very popular and expensive cut, primarily for its melt-in-the-mouth tenderness and less for its beefy flavor. Without vast marbling, it's best grilled or seared, only to Medium or less to retain its moisture, flavor and tenderness.

Porterhouse Cut from the large end of the short loin (closer to the back hip), it's actually two steaks in one, separated by a T shaped bone between. The somewhat rectangular side is the New York Strip, the rounder meat on the other side of the bone is the tenderloin. The only difference between a Porterhouse Steak and a T-Bone Steak is that the Porterhouse is cut from the large end of the short loin where the Tenderloin muscle is bigger. And because Tenderloin generally costs more than New York Strips, Porterhouse Steaks generally cost more than T-Bones...Great served whole (and thick).

T-Bone Cut from the CENTER of the short loin, it's very similar to the Porterhouse having both a New York Strip and a Tenderloin Steak separated by the T shaped bone. The only difference is that since this steak is cut from the CENTER of the short loin, the New York Strip is generally larger, and the tenderloin smaller, than in the Porterhouse.

New York Strip Cut From the short loin, it has a nice beefy flavor, a firm texture and is best served whole or sliced. Depending on the region, this steak is also called a Delmonico, Kansas City Steak, Shell Steak, Sirloin Club and Strip Steak. The **Delmonico Steak itself,** made famous at Delmonico's Restaurant in New York, is a name now used to describe SO many different cuts of steak from the loin area that its "name" has almost become irrelevant in predicting what cut of steak you are receiving. It's best to ask, to be sure it's what you are expecting.

Rib Eye (Steak) When well marbled, an excellent and beefy cut from the rib area. It's best served whole. The boneless rib eye steak is the same steak with the rib bone removed. Also called a **Delmonico** or a **Scotch Fillet.**

Top Sirloin A boneless cut from the loin, just in front of the back hip. Rich, meaty and tasty. Can be a bit on the tougher side if not sliced thinly.

Round Steak Comes from the top of the cow's hind leg. Like most cuts that come from the legs, it tends to be stringier. Be cautious, this cut of steak is quite lean which makes it easy to dry out when roasting or grilling.

Flank (London Broil) Long, thin and fibrous, this cut of meat comes from the animal's lower hind quarters and as such is quite tough and usually tenderized mechanically or by marinating. In the case of "London Broil" it's grilled and cut thinly against the grain to improve its tenderness.

Skirt Steak This muscle lies just under the flank and is part of that muscle group. Made popular by the invention of "fajitas" it's rather tough unless marinated and thinly sliced against the grain…

Flat Iron From the "Chuck" or shoulder of the animal, it's also called a Blade Steak or shoulder steak. Butler's Steak (UK) or Oyster Blade Steak (Australia). It's relatively speaking, a new cut to the retail markets. Unfortunately, because of where it is located and because of its size, there are only 2 to 4 steaks available per animal, thus not enough to market regularly. When rather well marbled, it is quite tender and can be grilled or pan seared with delicious results.

Chuck Steak Is cut from the neck and shoulder area of the animal. It sometimes contains a cross-section of rib bone. Chuck contains collagen which melts during the cooking of the meat and gives it a strong flavor. This cut of meat is commonly used in ground beef or for slow cooking methods like; braising, stewing, and pot roasting but not for grilling. At Nino's, you may not find this steak in our counter's meat case but we will gladly cut one to order, just for you!

Steak Techniques from the Experts:

- Chef Michael Lomonaco / Porterhouse Restaurant NYC Gets the Classic-Char with using only salt & pepper, "when the chemical structure of the salt is altered by the interaction of the heat, sugars and fats from the meat, the result is that mouth watering crispy exterior".
- Chef Jody Storch / Peter Luger Restaurant / Brooklyn, NY "If you use the best possible meat, it's hard to mess it up or, conversely, hard to improve it". "We use a 800 F gas broiler and then, after cooking, salt the meat and give it a brush of butter".
- Chef Tom Perini / Perini Ranch Steakhouse, Buffalo Gap, TX. Cooks over the state's indigenous Mesquite hard wood. "When you get the wood smoke, flame kiss, and the seasoning, you can really get the flavor of the beef".
- Jim Nuetzi, Ex. Chef / The Capital Grill Restaurant / National Uses an overhead broiler and starts their steaks off at a very high heat to caramelize the surface, then the heat is reduced to finish them off. If the meat is ordered medium or more well done, the steak is then sent to the oven for the final stages of cooking.
- Chef Brett McKee / Chef/Owner Oak Steakhouse / Charleston SC. Creates many unusual steak seasonings but then, once cooked, every steak gets finished with a brush of olive oil and butter steeped in slow roasted garlic and rosemary.
- Chef Michael Mina / Bourbon Steak Restaurant / Detroit etc. All steaks are submerged in a vat of melted butter and cooked to a temperature of 118 F before being plucked out of the butter bath and seared on a 1000 F grill to order.
- Chef Nils Noren / The French Culinary Institute NYC Employs the very latest "Sous Vide" technique of low temperature poaching by quickly deep frying the steaks first, then poaching them for 5 minutes in 132 F rendered beef fat. Upon a customer's order, he extracts them from the poaching fat and then places them back into the deep fryer for their FINAL finishing crispness.

Rate Your Steak

Not all steaks are created equal, having said that, all steaks have their own unique qualities and ALL definitely have a delicious purpose. Deciding on your purpose, can help you decide on your steak. Whether you're looking for "Beefy" Flavor, "Melt in Your Mouth" tenderness or just something reasonably affordable, knowing a little bit about each steak's qualities can help you to know you're getting the right steak for the job.

First and foremost, there are 3 simple rules when buying beef:

1. Steaks are muscles. And in beef, like all animals those used the most are tougher, those used the least are tender. The leg meat (round) is tough, however the tenderloin, located in a remote area under the loin, is rarely exercised and is, therefore very tender.
2. Tougher meat generally tastes "beefier", conversely tender meat, less so.
3. Tougher meat is usually less expensive, (flank is an exception)...

So... the decision for many is a hybrid of: Tenderness vs. Flavor vs. Cost. And everyone has their own preferences and budget. There is no right or wrong. Only what's right for you.

To help you with your decisions, we offer this simple chart below.

STEAK	TENDER (1-10)	FLAVOR (1-10)	Comments:
Tenderloin / Fillet	10	7	Generally, the most expensive cut of beef. Can be dry if overcooked. Very versatile as roast, grill, pan fry, stir fry.
Porterhouse	9	8	Best of BOTH worlds. The tenderness of the fillet side and flavor of the N.Y. Strip. The King of Steaks by many.
T-Bone	9	8	Apply everything about Porterhouse to T-Bones with the exception of a slightly smaller Tenderloin portion.
New York Strip	7	9	A favorite by many and more tender than rib-eye. A great combination of tenderness and flavor.
Rib Eye Steak	7	9	A little larger steak in diameter but just as tender as the New York Strip and every bit as flavorful.
Top Sirloin	6	9	Movin' our way back to the leg area means less tender but a lot less flavor. Sliced thinly you'll be quite pleased!
Round Steak	5	8	Less well marbled with fat and quite lean, this steak can become dry & tough if overcooked and not sliced thinly.
Flank	4	9	What it lacks in tenderness it more than makes up for in flavor. Marinated, grilled and sliced thin it's London Broil.
Skirt Steak	5	8	Lying just underneath the Flank, it's slightly more tender and nearly as flavorful. A GREAT Fajita steak choice!
Hanger	5 1/2	8	Like the Flank, marinating and slicing thinly improves this cut's tenderness and flavor greatly.
Flat Iron	7	9	Well marbled and rather tender, it's one of the few steaks in the front of the animal that's really quite delicious.
Chuck Steak	4 1/2	9	Lots of great beef flavor, but not really recommended for grilling. Commonly used for pot roast, stews & grinding.

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