THE PERFECT STEAK GUIDE
INTRODUCTION

STEAK IS THE ULTIMATE MEAL. WHEN PREPARED CORRECTLY, A STEAK HAS A SAVORY, FIRM OUTER CRUST AND A JUICY, PINK INTERIOR. THE FIRST BITE EXPLodes ON THE PALATE WITH THE DELICIOUS FLAVORS ONLY SEARED BEEF CAN PROVIDe.

ANYONE CAN PREPARE A SPECTACULAR STEAK DINNER BY FOLLOWING THE STEPS IN THIS GUIDE. PRO TIPS ARE INCLUDED SO EVEN THE MOST PROFICIENT STEAK MASTER CAN FIND A NEW TRICK OR TWO.

FOR A MEMORABLE STEAK DINNER, IT'S CRITICAL TO START WITH BEEF OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY, LIKE ANY OF THE CUTS FROM SNAKE RIVER F ARMS.
SELECTING A STEAK

GRADE In the world of beef, fat equals flavor. Intramuscular fat (the fat distributed throughout the red portion of a steak) is called marbling. Marbling makes a steak richer in flavor, juicy and tender. Beef is graded in the United States based primarily on the amount of marbling. The steaks you find at the grocery store or butcher fall into three United States Department of Agriculture or USDA grades.

1. SELECT – A steak from this grade is very lean with a minimal amount of intramuscular fat.

2. CHOICE – Steaks will have good flavor and the texture is more tender. Most steaks found in grocery stores and butcher shops are Choice.

3. PRIME – Only 3 to 4% of beef receive this top rating. These are the most highly marbled, flavorful and tender steaks. They can be found at specialty butchers and high-end grocery stores, although most Prime goes to top-of-the-line steakhouses.

There are types of beef varieties, like Wagyu, that rate beyond the USDA standards. These ultra-marbled varieties are graded using a Japanese standard monitored by the Japanese Meat Grading Association or JMGA. The grades use an alphanumeric score that starts with a letter and adds a number. The magic term that’s thrown around is A5, the very best of 100% Wagyu beef. The letter scores yield, or how much usable beef can be sourced from an animal, from A (above standard) to C (below standard). The number scores marbling and other grading criteria on a scale from 1 to 5.

The Beef Marbling Scale (BMS) is a single method that allows USDA and JMGA grades to be cross-referenced. BMS is scaled from 1 to 12. USDA Choice is a 2 to 4 on the scale, Prime is 5, Wagyu-cross runs between 6 and 8 and 100% Wagyu A5 scores 11 to 12.
Angus is perhaps the most recognized cattle breed, but there are many other high quality breeds raised for beef in the U.S.

Wagyu is the breed used for the famous Kobe beef, however not all Wagyu is Kobe. Only Wagyu breeds from the Kobe region of Japan can be called Kobe. There are other 100% Wagyu herds in the U.S. and in some cattle raising countries like Australia. These have rich, dense marbling, but cannot be legally sold as Kobe beef.

A third variety of beef to consider is Wagyu cross cattle like Snake River Farms, designated by the USDA as American Wagyu. The best American Wagyu beef is 50% pure Wagyu and 50% other high quality breeds. We think Chef Wolfgang Puck sums up American Wagyu the best: “It has the richness of Japanese beef with lots of marbling, but the flavor is more akin to what we’re used to in American. You can give me a pound of the best Wagyu from Japan, or a pound of this, and I’ll choose the New York form Snake River Farms every time.”
1. **Ribeye** - This is the classic steak eater’s steak. The ribeye is rich in marbling (remember, this is the area meat inspectors examine to grade beef) and also has an abundant amount of fat that separates the fine grained center from the deeply flavored cap. All the fat and marbling translates to a flavorful and tender steak. The ribeye can be too rich for some, but for the intrepid steak lover, it is the ultimate steak. When the bone is left in place, it’s a cowboy steak. When the bone is left long, it’s a tomahawk.

2. **Tenderloin (Filet Mignon)** - Widely considered the premier steak, the tenderloin has a soft, buttery texture because it comes from a seldom used muscle. There is very little marbling in this cut making its flavor mild and moderately beefy. The fork-tender texture and prestigious reputation of the filet mignon keeps it on the top seller list at white tablecloth restaurants.

3. **New York Strip** - Sourced from the short loin primal, the strip steak (also known as the strip steak or Kansas City strip) is well marbled with a hearty beef flavor and a tight, firm texture. The strip is well-loved at steakhouses and has a distinct, long shape without the thick fat deposits of a ribeye.

4. **Porterhouse** - The cut that’s really two-steaks-in-one with a strip steak and tenderloin separated by a T-shaped bone. A Porterhouse is cut on the back end of the short loin primal and has a tenderloin that is 1.5” or wider. (A T-bone is cut from the front of the short loin so the tenderloin section is smaller.) The Porterhouse is an impressive steak due to its large size and that bone.
**DONENESS & TEMPERATURE**

How a steak is cooked (rare, medium rare, etc.) is a personal preference, but chefs agree that medium rare is ideal. If a steak is cooked too rare, the meat can be very firm to the bite and hard to chew. If it’s cooked too well-done, the meat is dry, stringy and tough.

Temperature is the best way to determine how a steak is cooked. While there are many ways to gauge a steak’s doneness, we highly recommend a fast-read, accurate digital thermometer. Our tool of choice is the Thermapen from Thermoworks. Here are the magic numbers you’ll need to determine when a steak is cooked to your preference. The temperature listed is when to remove the steak from the heat. When the steak rests, it will continue to cook and the temperature will rise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREFERENCE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>INTERNAL TEMP.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Red Center, Very Cool</td>
<td>110°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Rare</td>
<td>Red, Warm Center</td>
<td>120°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Pink Throughout</td>
<td>130°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Well</td>
<td>Pink Center</td>
<td>140°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well</td>
<td>No Pink</td>
<td>Just Don’t</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Use Thermapen to measure internal temperature.
In the following section you’ll find some of our favorite ways to cook a steak. Most of them, except the sous vide method, don’t require any special equipment. Follow these step-by-step guides for a great steak everytime.

For more guides and recipes, visit: snakeriverfarms.com/recipes
This is a classic way to prepare any of the Big Four steaks. A skillet (cast iron or carbon steel are best) and an oven are all the equipment needed. Works well for steaks 1.5” and thicker.

**SEASON**
Heat a heavy skillet over medium high heat until hot. Add a light coat of vegetable oil to the skillet. Season steaks with salt and pepper.

**COOK**
Place skillet in a 350˚F oven for 10 to 20 minutes depending on desired doneness. Turn once half way through the cooking time. Remove from oven when preferred internal temperature is reached. See chart for suggested temperatures.

**SEAR**
Place steaks in hot skillet and sear for 4 minutes, turning once. If a steak sticks to the skillet, it’s not ready to turn. Give it a few moments until it releases on its own.

**REST**
Remove steaks from skillet and cover loosely with aluminum foil. Let stand 5 to 10 minutes. The steaks will continue to cook and the temperature will rise about 5˚F.

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This method is the darling of many “how to cook a steak” tutorials. The Reverse Sear cooks a steak at low temp. to obtain an edge-edge juicy pink center, then adds a nice crust as the finishing step. This works great with large steaks, particularly those with the bone intact.

1. **SEASON**
   
   Heat oven to 275°F. Season steak with salt and pepper. Cover a baking sheet with foil and place a metal rack in the middle. The idea is to elevate the steak from the pan.

   **NOTE:** Some chefs recommend a starting temperature as low as 200 or 225°F. This works fine, but keep in mind the cook temperature will be longer.

2. **COOK**
   
   Place the pan, grill and steak in the oven. Bake until the steak reaches the temperature that matches your preference. See the chart for exact temperatures. For medium rare, cook until 120°F. This can take up to 60 minutes, but begin checking the internal temperature at 30 minutes.

3. **REST**
   
   Remove steak from oven, loosely cover with foil and allow to rest for 10 to 15 minutes.

4. **SEAR**
   
   Preheat a skillet or heavy based pan to a very hot temperature and sear steaks for one minute each side. Serve immediately.

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WE HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR STEAKS

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