

Wise Notes for Consumers

Submitted: 4-21-17

Know your Beef

Nothing is worse than grilling a steak, enjoying the aroma as it cooks, and then barely being able to cut through it with your best steak knife. The issue probably isn't your skill on the grill. It's most likely a bad match of cooking method and cut of beef.

The following information from the Texas Beef Council will equip you with knowledge to prepare the perfect meal packed full of nutrition. Beef is an excellent source of 10 essential nutrients, including protein, zinc, vitamin B12, vitamin B6 and niacin. On average, a 3-oz. serving of lean beef is about 150 calories

Lean cuts of beef — those with little marbling and external fat — are better suited to slow cooking methods, such as smoking. Slow cooking allows connective tissue and muscle fibers to break down. The process tenderizes what otherwise would be a tough chew. Those cuts are from the parts of the animal that work the hardest, the muscles used for walking and locomotion.

Generally, those cuts are the round, which is at the hindquarters of the animal, and the chuck and brisket, which are at the front of the animal, from the shoulders to the chest. Cuts of meat from these areas, which would be good for your smoker, include: brisket; chuck roast; arm roasts; top and bottom round roasts; tip roasts; eye round roast; and boneless rump roast.

In between the round and the chuck are the “middle meats,” which are best for grilling. They

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tend to have a lot of marbling, which are the little white flecks of fat throughout a piece of meat. Generally, the more marbling in the meat, the more palatable it will be — flavorful, tender and juicy. The rib and short loin tend to have the most marbling. The sirloin, which offers lean, tender cuts of meat without much fat, is situated behind the short loin and in front of the round.

Cuts from the rib, short loin and sirloin that would be great on the grill include: bone-in and boneless ribeye steaks; back ribs; strip steak, such as New York or Kansas City strip; T-bone steak; porterhouse steak; top sirloin; and tenderloin.

Skirt steaks, which come from the middle part of the animal's underside, found in the flank area, are good quick-skillet muscle cuts best used for fajitas, tacos and in salads.

To gain additional information on cooking with beef, chicken, pork or fish, be sure to attend the Path to the Plate Grilling Workshop scheduled for April 27 and May 4 at the Wise County Fairgrounds. The event is scheduled to begin each night at 6pm. April 27 will focus on pork and poultry while the May 4th workshop will focus on beef and fish. Along with great information, recipes and samples, we have outstanding door prizes: a gas grill and charcoal grill donated by Lowe's Home Improvement; a gift card to Wise Custom Meat Market; Seasonings from Meat Church BBQ; and a five lb. box of assorted beef cuts donated by RNR Cattle Company. Contact the Extension office at 940/627-3341 to register for these events.

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