

## Selecting Retail Cuts for the Grill

When you're selecting retail cuts for the grill, making a few simple considerations before you purchase your meat can make a more enjoyable grilling and eating experience for everyone.

Remember:

- Grilling is a very dry form of cooking
- Moisture can leave meat quickly
- Moisture isn't replaced with conventional grilling techniques
- Only cuts of meat suited for grilling should be used
- Look for cuts high in potential moisture and tenderness that can be cooked in a relatively short period of time

Beef and pork cuts that best meet these standards are **steak** and **chops**.

- **Steak** - a whole muscle cut of beef sliced no thicker than three inches
- **Chop** – a whole muscle cut of pork (or lamb) sliced no more than three inches thick

*AVOID:*

*Cuts thicker than three inches are considered roasts; not usually recommended for grilling because of increased cooking time*

What makes a quality eating experience?

- **Tenderness**
  - Avoid moving muscles
  - Choose support muscle from the rib or loin area
  - Thankfully, the name of the cut should help consumers determine where the cut comes from (ie. **Rib** eye steak, Pork **Loin** chop)
  - But – “sirloin” is not referring to the loin
- **Intramuscular Fat**
  - Fat inside the cut – aka marbling
  - Crucial to an enjoyable eating experience
  - Large amounts are highly desirable
  - Appear as white flecks within pink (pork) or red (beef) lean portion of the cut

*AVOID:*

*Cuts with large fat amounts on the outside of the cut – aka intermuscular fat*

- *Usually wind up as trimmings or waste*
- *Appear as solid white areas around the lean portion of the cut*

### USDA Grading System (Beef)

- Used to help consumers identify cuts with large amounts of intramuscular fat
- Highest grade is Prime, followed by Choice, then Select
- Usually, grades aren't present because they're not required and they cost the processor

### Branded Meat (ex. Certified Angus Beef)

- Available through some retailers
- Intramuscular fat requirements vary from program to program

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