



# WHAT MAKES BEEF TENDER?

## ◆ BREED MATTERS ◆

Quality beef starts with high-quality cattle, time and good management. Black Angus is a breed known for its superior flavor and tenderness.

## ◆ DIET MATTERS ◆

All cattle are grass-fed but research shows that grain-finished cattle produce more marbling (or more flecks of fat within the lean), which means more flavorful, tender beef.



**Black Canyon Angus Beef is a USDA certified program with strict specifications.**

### LOOK FOR MARBLING

All beef is inspected but Black Canyon is also graded to identify and sort beef by palatability – tenderness, juiciness and flavor of cooked beef.

USDA Choice is more tender and flavorful than USDA Select. Marbling, the flecks of fat within the lean, is directly related to the flavor and juiciness of cooked beef.



### BEEF AGING

Beef aging (both wet and dry) after harvesting increases tenderness. The aging process allows natural enzymes in beef to break down specific proteins. Not only is the meat naturally tenderized, but flavor is improved. Aging is done under strict controls and is not something to be done in a home kitchen.



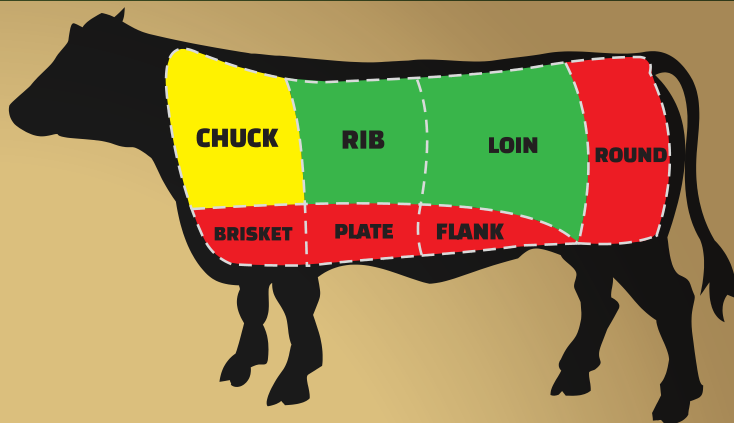
### COOKING METHOD COUNTS

Match the correct cooking method to the beef cut. Tender beef cuts can be cooked using dry-heat methods – grill, broil, roast, skillet, stir-fry. Less tender beef cuts can be cooked using moist heat methods – braise, pot roast, stew, slow-cooker.

### DONENESS IS IMPORTANT

Overcooking can undo all of the factors.

- Use a meat thermometer for perfectly cooked tender steaks and roasts – 145°F medium rare, 160°F medium. Large roasts need to be pulled 5 to 10 degrees below because the temperature rises during the standing time.
- Braised or pot-roasted beef should always be well-done and tenderness is how to check for doneness. Braised beef is tender when a two-tined fork can be inserted without resistance, and released easily.



### KNOW THE LOCATION

- = tender, less exercised muscles
- = less tender, more exercised muscles
- = both less tender and tender

### ACROSS THE GRAIN



Cutting across the grain shortens meat fibers – useful to know when carving cooked beef or cutting raw beef into strips for stir-fry.

### MARINATE



Less tender, thin cuts (steaks, medallions, strips) benefit from a tenderizing marinade containing a natural food acid (citrus juice, vinaigrettes, salsas) or a natural enzyme (fresh ginger, pineapple, papaya).

### POUND OR FLATTEN



Pounding or flattening breaks down meat fibers and connective tissue to help tenderize thinner beef cuts - typically from the round. A common technique used is Mexican Beef Milanese or Chicken Fried Steak, a Southern classic.

*Time saving tip: place steaks in marinade prior to freezing. To use, defrost/marinate at the same time.*