

I haven't eaten a lot of steak in my life. I was a vegetarian for almost a decade, from middle school until college, and there was always something about steak-and-potatoes culture that seemed like it couldn't be mine. Steak houses felt like a boys' club vestige. Eating blood red meat at every opportunity felt like it stemmed from the most unappealing type of American patriotism, and yet after you have a good steak, there's no denying they are delicious and satisfying and well worth the price tag.

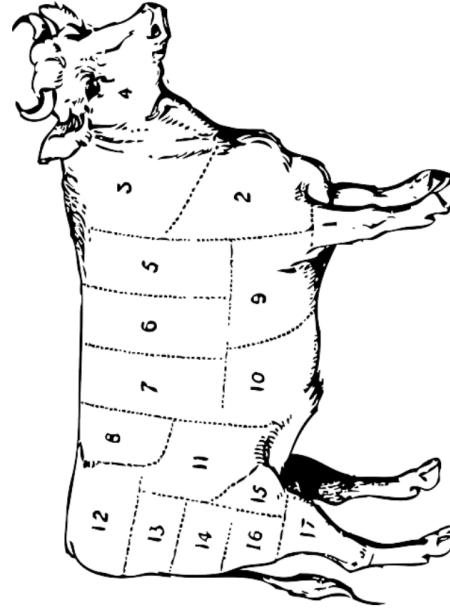
I haven't eaten a lot of steak in my life and don't plan to eat a lot of steak in my life, but when I want steak, I want good steak. I want a good cut, I want it cooked right, I want it seasoned well, and I want it rare or medium rare.

Last night, I cooked a perfect steak. A prime New York strip steak seared on a cast iron pan, then placed in a 425 degree oven for 8 minutes, with a glaze stolen directly from Bobby Flay.

In this issue, Megan wrote Steak and Jess wrote Steakhouse, and they both wrote recommendations.



The General was founded in 2009 by Jess Driscoll and Megan Westerby. Each issue is hyper-focused on a single food noun. Find the archive at:  
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The steak rested just long enough to wilt spinach in olive oil and garlic, slice some fresh cherry tomatoes from my porch garden, and then I ate it.

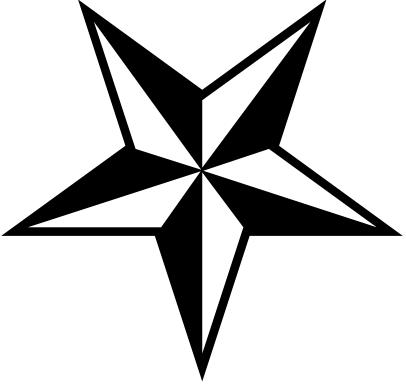
My expensive indulgence was fantastic. The texture of the crust and the flavor of the glaze were so perfectly matched I sat staring at a mouthful before I ate it, contemplating the perfection I was experiencing. This sounds hyperbolic, but my roommate said the same thing about the steak I made for him.

The entire meal was made even better by the sense of satisfaction I achieved from cooking something so magnificent at home. I could've had a similar steak at a number of restaurants for triple the price.

Instead, I researched, shopped, set off a fire alarm, squinted through the smoke to find my steaks, and opened a bottle of wine feeling like I'd learned something and accomplished something last night. Learning by doing makes you grow, and a good meal at the end is the best reward.



(Bobby Flay's glaze, by the way, is 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard, 2 tablespoons honey, 1 tablespoon prepared horseradish, drained, 3 mint leaves, finely chopped, kosher salt, and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Brush it on your steak near the end of cooking, and enjoy.)



Maybe I should've ordered the steak. But that's not something I do in restaurants. I look at the list of steaks—size, cut, size, cut—and my eyes go blurry. I'm a pretty good cook at home. In a restaurant, I want to be impressed. I want you to wow me, and a piece of meat on a plate isn't enough.

At Hy's Steakhouse in Whistler, and I ordered the fried chicken. It's a problem I have. Given the chance, I will always want the fried chicken.

Living in Canada, it's hard to know when your next chance for fried chicken that doesn't come in a paper bucket will present itself. It's a nice surprise to find on a menu. I'm looking for the taste that lives in my head and a place where I can return and find it again.

Hy's fried chicken wasn't that fried chicken, but it was good. It comes with broccoli and creamed corn, a classic picnic lunch. The chicken, as much as it was baked rather than fried, was delicious. A crunchy crispy cracker coating, and the juicy meat of a cut cooked on the bone.

HY'S STEAKHOUSE: Opened in 1955, Hy's still looks it. There are TVs playing sports over the bar now, but Hy's retains the rest of its old school feel: dark wood, waiters in white jackets, a well-stocked bar, and a menu that focuses more on the meat than the sides.

STUBB'S: The authenticity mongers will tell you you have to visit the first and original Stubb's to fully appreciate their food, but I'm more grateful for the stand at the airport, remembering it better and savor it more, and the chance to grab a rub or a sauce for home extends the memory even further.

But it was the sides that made this dish for me. It was the tender broccoli, sautéed in something that couldn't only be butter, that made me moan and groan and tell the table they were missing out. It was the creamed corn, with salty bites of bacon, that I saved for my last bite.

It was not eating a steak in a place which demands you eat a steak. My fried chicken tasted like the best kind of rebellion.

★★★★

WILLOW RANCH BBQ: You know excellent local BBQ joints are all over the country, but pulling off the interstate somewhere between Los Angeles and San Jose on the 5 and finding Willow Ranch BBQ was still the surprise delight in the middle of a whirlwind day of driving. Yelp was invented to help us find such places.

GOTHAM: If you were a celebrity in the nineties and you found yourself in Vancouver to play a hockey game, shoot a movie, or star in a sci-fi television series, you probably ate a steak at Gotham. I never have, but the rumour is George Clooney is a fan.

## PICK YOUR MEAT. PICK YOUR SIDES

mashed potatoes, roast potatoes, scalloped potatoes, baked potato (would you like butter? sour cream? bacon bits? cheddar cheese? scallions?), sweet potatoes, candied yams, french fries, potato salad, pasta salad, caesar salad, coleslaw, green salad and the dressing on the side (we have ranch dressing, russian dressing, italian dressing, thousand islands, vinegarette, bleu cheese, and house dressing, if you're brave), macaroni and cheese or buttered noodles, creamed corn or on the cob, vegetable medley, gratin on top, collared greens, baked beans, fried pickles, hushpuppies, free breadsticks, garlic bread, texas toast, corn bread, and a dinner roll (white or wheat). just don't fill up on bread.

PETER LUGER'S: My parents have been to Peter Luger's without me, perhaps before they even moved to New York, and they loved it. Someday after they've left Brooklyn, I'll take them there, to remind them NYC's indulgences can make up for its shortcomings. New York has perfected its old school indulgences in ways only Boston and New Orleans can come close to.