

Title:

A Good Steak Is Hard To Find

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Summary:

Most people hear the word beef and they automatically think about steaks, especially the big four: filet mignon, NY Strip, rib eyes and even top sirloins all pop onto the grill at a great rate. And of course, beef also means hamburger, be it patties, meatloaf or hamburger helper.

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Article Body:

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However, the movement to artisan and natural foods leave most ranchers in the dust. Many ranchers trying to meet the demand for source verified, locally produced and of course, all natural beef have been smacked hard when he finds the consumer only wants steaks.

Let's take a quick view what a rancher sees when he slaughters a steer. He gets about 450 lbs of beef. Only about 100 lbs is actual steaks (if he is lucky). Yeah, ouch for him and for his consumers. So he has to figure out a way to market the rest of the beef.

The easiest way is to grind it into hamburger. And actually, 350 pounds of hamburger doesn't seem all that much, but it really is. While it will easily fit into a large chest freezer, this amount of hamburger will feed 1050 individuals a 1/3 lb burger, which is a generous size. That is a lot of people. A family of three would get pretty sick of eating this much burger over the course of the

year.

Let's look at other cuts. Recently, and especially in the restaurant circle, you may have heard about some other steaks such as flank, skirt, hanger and especially flatiron. The last one is the second most tender steak to filet mignon. All of these steaks are incredibly delicious, but there is not much of them. All together, maybe 15-20 lbs per animal. A couple of those steaks such as hanger and skirt, well there are only two per animal.

Those butcher steaks as they are often called don't really help much. Now we are down to about 330 lbs of beef. Unfortunately, we are now into the cuts that require a bit of time and very small amount of cooking skills. However, in many ways these cuts fill the house with delightful aromas and of course eating enjoyment.

I wouldn't touch a grocery store roast or hamburger for that matter. But artisan or locally raised beef roasts, wow. Some awesome roasts can really wow your family and friends. Artisan roasts are well marbled, almost self-marinating. I'm used to dry-aged beef and so my roasts are essentially fork tender when cooked.

Roasts, bones and some off cuts make up about 150 to 200 pounds. One of my favorite roasts is the old fashion chuck roast. There is close to 50 pounds of this mouth watering cut. The best way to cook this cut is with a simple crockpot. Yup, it will take 8 hours or so to cook and the last few, you might even nibble a bit here and there. But, you don't have to stand there for 8 hours. Put it in the morning and go have fun.

Rump roasts are also good when properly cooked and especially from quality beef. They are a bit dryer than chuck and with a tighter grain, but sliced thin and served with a mushroom gravy, just incredible.

Then we have the odd cuts, London broils, sirloin tip roasts (luxury), fresh brisket (barbecue beef), eye of round (poor mans tenderloin), and a few other steaks such as bottom round.

A few of the odd cuts that even chefs like are short ribs. Braised short ribs are almost sinful for how good they can be. You would be amazed how many 5-star restaurants serve this simple but elegant treat.

While we continue to whittle the cuts down, at the end of the day, you will have about 150-200 pounds of hamburger to eat. And you thought we would eliminate it all. Sorry, can't do it. But a good meatloaf is a pretty tough dish to turn down.

The best way to help an artisan rancher including ourselves is to buy a eighth or a quarter of beef. It is also cost effective way as well and includes some steaks, some roasts and of course some hamburger.

Here is a simple and elegant dish using chuck roasts that your family will beg for more.

Mock Beef Stroganoff

Traditional beef stroganoff is made with diced tenderloin roast. Personally, any beef dish would be incredible with tenderloin, but there are actually better tasting options that take a little longer to make and are touch more economical.

6 tablespoons butter 2 tablespoons minced onion 2 pounds chuck roast, cut thin in 1 x 1 inch cubes ˝ pound mushrooms, sliced salt and pepper to taste 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg 1 cup sour cream, at room temperature

1.Preheat the oven to 300F. 2.Melt 2 tablespoons of butter in a heavy dutch oven with the heat on medium-high, add the beef and quickly sear all sides until the beef is brown. Add a cup of beef stock and place the lid on the dutch oven and cook until fork tender, about 2 hours. Check occasionally to make sure the meat does not dry out during cooking. 3.Melt 2 tablespoons of the butter in a heavy skillet. Add the onion and cook slowly until transparent. Remove and set aside. 4.Add the remaining 2 tablespoons butter to the skillet. Stir in the mushrooms, cover and cook 3 minutes. Season with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Whisk the sour cream and add to the pan, but do not allow it to boil. Return the beef and onions to the pan and just heat through. 5.Serve over a bed of egg noodles.