

QUALITY GRADING

for the at-home chef

Quality Grade is a combination of expected eating characteristics of the beef, or what is called palatability. Palatability of meat is combined of tenderness, juiciness and flavor. USDA Quality Grades are standards that a steak must meet to reflect differences in expected eating quality among beef. Quality grades are highly dependent on the amount of marbling within the meat.

Marbling is the dispersion of fat within the lean. USDA graders evaluate the amount and distribution of marbling in the ribeye muscle at the cut surface after the carcass has been ribbed between the 12th and 13th rib. The most commonly used method for evaluating marbling is visual comparison to published standards.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



Prime beef has abundant marbling and is generally sold in restaurants and hotels. Prime roasts and steaks are excellent for dry-heat cooking such as broiling, roasting or grilling.

Choice beef is high quality, but has less marbling than Prime. Choice roasts and steaks from the loin and rib will be very tender, juicy, and flavorful and are suited for dry-heat cooking.



Select beef is very uniform in quality and normally leaner than the higher grades. It is fairly tender, but, because it has less marbling, it may lack some of the juiciness and flavor of the higher grades. Only the tender cuts should be cooked with dry heat, while their cuts should be marinated before cooking or braised to obtain maximum tenderness and flavor.

The **Meat** 
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