



# MOUNTAIN VALLEY FARMS

## HOW TO FILL OUT YOUR BEEF CUT SHEET

You bought a share of a whole animal — now you get to decide how it comes back. This guide walks you through every choice on the butcher's order form, plain and simple. The form is yours to fill how you like; the **"Our Pick"** notes are just how we'd do it.

### FIRST, HOW THE CUT SHEET WORKS

- ◆ **Anything you don't circle becomes ground beef.** Blank lines aren't "skipped" — that meat gets ground into burger. So mark what you want.
- ◆ **Lines with "OR" force one choice.** A muscle can become a roast *or* steaks *or* grind — not all three. Circle exactly one.
- ◆ **You'll fill in two blanks on steaks:** how many *per pack* (2 is standard) and how *thick* in inches.
- ◆ **Share size matters.** A few items marked with an asterisk (whole eye of round, whole brisket) aren't available on a quarter beef.
- ◆ **Plan freezer + pickup.** The locker isn't long-term storage — beef is picked up within 3 days of the call that it's ready.

# 1 THE PRIMES — WHAT'S ON EVERY CUT SHEET

These are the steaks almost everyone keeps. They come from the most tender part of the animal and need nothing but heat, salt, and a hot pan or grill. If you do nothing else, get these right.

## Ribeye

*The rich, marbled one. Hot grill or cast-iron sear.*

The crowd favorite — fat woven through the meat keeps it juicy and forgiving.

Cut 1¼"–1½"

## NY Strip

*Firmer, beefy, classic steakhouse. Grill or pan-sear.*

Leaner than ribeye with a satisfying chew and clean flavor.

Cut 1"–1¼"

## Filet Mignon

*The most tender, leanest cut. Sear, then finish in the oven.*

Buttery-soft, mild flavor. Wrap in bacon or sauce it — there's little fat of its own.

Cut 1½"–2"

## Sirloin

*The everyday workhorse steak. Grill quick and hot.*

Great value, leaner, perfect for weeknight dinners and steak salads.

Cut 1"–1¼"

## T-Bone / Porterhouse

*Two steaks in one — strip on one side, filet on the other.*

Bone-in flavor and a showpiece on the plate (see the tradeoff in §4).

Cut 1¼"–1½"

## Flank Steak

*Lean and fibrous. Marinate, sear hot, slice thin across the grain.*

Fajitas, stir-fry, steak tacos. Only one per half-beef — grab it.

Whole, not by thickness

**OUR PICK** Two steaks per pack is the sweet spot for most families — enough for a meal, not so big you're thawing more than you'll eat. Keep ribeyes, strips, and sirloins; decide filet vs. T-bone using §4.

# 2 HOW THICK SHOULD YOU CUT STEAKS?

Thickness is the blank people stall on. Thicker steaks are harder to overcook and give you a better seared crust over a juicy center — but each one is a bigger portion, so you get fewer steaks total from the animal. Thin steaks cook fast and feed more meals but dry out easily.

¾"

Thin — quick weeknight, cooks in minutes, easy to overcook

OUR PICK

1"

All-purpose. Strips & sirloins. Reliable for most folks

OUR PICK

1¼"

The steakhouse standard. Great for ribeye & T-bone

1½"

Big sear, juicy center. Ribeye & filet shine here

2"

Special-occasion filet. Needs sear-then-oven method

**OUR PICK** Cut everyday steaks (strip, sirloin) at 1" and your premiums (ribeye, filet, T-bone) at 1¼"–1½". Thicker steaks reward you most when you've got a good thermometer.

### 3 ROASTS, BRAISES & THE REST OF THE ANIMAL

The rest of the cut sheet is mostly "roast or steaks or grind" decisions on tougher, more flavorful muscles. These cuts love low heat and time — pot roasts, smokers, slow cookers, and soups.

#### Chuck Roast

*Pot roast & slow cooker royalty.*

The best braising roast — falls apart tender. Steaks from it want braising too, or send extra to grind.

#### Brisket

*Low-and-slow smoker classic.*

Whole for a true smoked brisket; cut in half for two cookable pieces; or grind. (Whole not on quarter shares.)

#### London Broil (Top Round)

*Marinate, grill/broil hot, slice thin against the grain.*

Or take it as top-round steaks or cube steak.

#### Bottom Round / Tip / Eye of Round

*Lean roasts → roast beef & deli slicing.*

Or steaks, or cube steak (tenderized → country-fried & smothered). Eye of round whole not on quarters.

#### Stew Beef

*Stews, chili, hearty braises.*

Pre-cubed and ready. Capped around 20 lb per half so it doesn't eat your steaks.

#### Short Ribs / BBQ Ribs

*Braise (short ribs) or grill/smoke (BBQ ribs).*

The rib line is one choice — pick the cooking style you'll actually use.

#### Soup Shank

*Broth, soup, osso buco.*

Cross-cut bone-in shank — deep beefy stock and marrow. Cheap flavor; say yes.

#### Cube Steak

*Country-fried steak, smothered in gravy.*

A way to use round cuts. Tenderized and ready for the skillet.

#### Ground Beef

*Burgers, tacos, meatloaf, sauce, chili.*

Everything not circled lands here. The most-used item in most freezers — don't underestimate it. (Leanness in §6.)

**OUR PICK** Keep one or two chuck roasts for winter, send most round cuts to roasts or grind (round steaks can be chewy), and always take the soup shank and stew beef. When in doubt between a so-so steak and burger — **choose burger**. You'll use it.

### 4 THE TENDERLOIN TRADEOFF — FILET VS. T-BONE

This is the one that confuses everyone, and the form even flags it: "NY Strip OR T-Bone" and "if T-bone selected, filets are part of the steak." Here's why you can't have it all. The tenderloin runs along one side of the backbone; the strip runs along the other. You get to use that tenderloin **one of two ways** — but not both.

#### Take Filets Separately

The butcher removes the whole tenderloin and cuts it into dedicated **filet mignon** packs. The strip side then becomes boneless **NY strips**.

→ *Bigger, dedicated filet portions • boneless & easy to cook • more total premium steaks.*

OR

#### Take T-Bones / Porterhouse

The tenderloin stays **on the bone**, so each steak has strip on one side and a wedge of filet on the other. No separate filet packs.

→ *Steakhouse presentation • bone-in flavor • smaller filet portion per steak.*

**OUR PICK** If you genuinely love filet mignon, take them **separate** (and enjoy boneless strips). If you'd rather have the dramatic bone-in steak and don't mind a smaller filet, take **T-bones/porterhouse**. Bought a whole? Split the difference — filets from one half, T-bones from the other.

## 5 BONE-IN VS. BONELESS

Comes up on the rib roast and a few others. Neither is wrong — it's flavor and presentation versus convenience.

### Bone-In

More flavor and juicier results — the bone insulates the meat and cooks more evenly. A bone-in **rib roast (prime rib)** is a holiday showstopper.

→ *Best flavor & presentation • takes more freezer space • a little trickier to carve.*

VS

### Boneless

Easier to cook evenly, carve, and portion, with less waste and tidier packaging.

→ *Convenient & easy to slice • packs smaller • a touch less flavor.*

**OUR PICK** Go **bone-in on the rib roast** if it's headed for a special dinner — it's worth it. Go **boneless** when you just want easy weeknight slicing. For ribs, "bone-in" is the whole point.

## 6 GROUND BEEF — CHOOSING YOUR LEANNESS

You'll pick a target ratio of lean to fat. More fat = more flavor and juicier burgers but more shrinkage in the pan; leaner = less grease but can dry out. Because ours is **grass-fed and naturally lean**, the butcher gets "as close as possible based on the animal's own fat content."

### 80/20

*80% lean · 20% fat*

Juiciest, most flavorful. The burger-night choice. Some shrinkage on the grill.

### ★ OUR PICK

### 85/15

*85% lean · 15% fat*

The all-rounder. Burgers, tacos, meatloaf, sauce — does it all without much grease.

### 90/10

*90% lean · 10% fat*

Lean. Best for tacos, chili, and skillet dishes you drain. Burgers can come out dry.

**OUR PICK** **85/15** if you want one ratio that does everything. If your house is split, ask for **80/20 for burgers** and **90/10 for cooked-and-drained dishes** — you can specify per pack.

## 7 A WORD ON AGING

Before cutting, the carcass hangs in a cold cooler to **age**. Natural enzymes break down muscle fiber (making the beef more **tender**) while a little moisture evaporates (**concentrating the flavor**). The form defaults to **14 days**, with a small extra fee beyond that.

### Standard — 14 Days

*Clean, tender, balanced.*

The sweet spot for most beef. Tender and flavorful without any funk. No extra charge.

### Longer — 21 to 28+ Days

*Deeper, nuttier, more "dry-aged" character.*

More tenderness and bold flavor, but you lose some take-home weight to moisture and trim, and pay an aging fee.

**OUR PICK** **14 days** for your first beef — it's reliably excellent. Once you know you love beefy, dry-aged flavor and don't mind a little less yield, try **21 days** on your next one.

## 8 PRE-MADE PATTIES

You can have part of your ground beef formed into ready-to-cook **patties** for a fee. Pure convenience — pull from the freezer straight to the grill.

### The Upside

Freezer-to-grill convenience, consistent portions, great for cookouts and busy nights. No mixing or shaping.

→ *Effortless burgers all summer.*



### The Catch

Costs an **extra fee**, and there's a **25 lb minimum** — so you're committing a real chunk of your ground to patties up front.

→ *Less flexibility; bulk ground is cheaper.*

**OUR PICK** Worth it if you grill burgers all season and want zero hassle. Skip it your first time if you're not sure — you can always shape patties yourself from bulk ground for free.

## 9 BONES & ORGANS — DON'T LEAVE THEM BEHIND

It's *your* animal, so these are yours for the asking — and grass-fed organ meats and bones are genuinely sought-after. If you won't use them, just say no; if you're curious, they're some of the best value on the sheet.

### Heart

*Lean, rich, nutrient-dense.*

Grill or braise and slice thin. Tastes like a clean, deep steak. A nutritional powerhouse.

### Liver

*Liver & onions, or pâté.*

Iron- and vitamin-rich. Grass-fed liver is milder and prized — soak in milk if new to it.

### Tongue

*Braised low & slow.*

Incredibly tender once cooked — the classic for *tacos de lengua*.

### Oxtail

*Braise into soup or stew.*

Loaded with gelatin and marrow for rich, silky broths. A delicacy.

### Soup Shank & Bones

*Bone broth, stock, marrow.*

The base of incredible homemade broth. Nearly free flavor — always worth grabbing.

### Not Sure?

*It costs nothing to try.*

Take the heart, soup shank, and bones at minimum. They freeze well and the broth alone is worth it.

## IF YOU'RE OVERWHELMED — OUR EASY DEFAULT

Not sure where to start? Circle these and you'll have a freezer that gets used. Adjust from here as you learn what your family reaches for.

|                        |                               |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ribeye & NY Strip      | 2 per pack · 1¼"              |
| Sirloin                | 2 per pack · 1"               |
| Filet vs. T-Bone       | T-bones (bone-in, simplest)   |
| Chuck Roast            | Keep 1-2 · 3 lb each          |
| Round cuts             | Roasts or grind               |
| Brisket                | Half (or grind if no smoker)  |
| Stew Beef & Soup Shank | Yes to both                   |
| Ground Beef            | 85/15 · 1 lb packs            |
| Aging                  | 14 days                       |
| Patties                | Skip first time               |
| Bones & Organs         | Heart, shank & bones at least |

*Still have questions? Ask us before you turn in your sheet — we're glad to walk through it. The butcher cuts exactly what you circle, so there are no wrong answers, only your preferences.*



### MOUNTAIN VALLEY FARMS

Family-Owned Grass-Fed Beef · Boones Mill, Virginia

Cuts & processing options based on The Butcher's Block custom beef order form. Availability of some cuts depends on share size.