

Open Prairie Natural Angus[®] beef
December 12, 2011

Grilling

Use these cuts of *Full Circle Natural Angus*[®] beef when you want a great grilled steak:

- Ribeye Steaks (bone-in and boneless)
- Tenderloin Steaks, aka Filet Mignon
- Top Sirloin Steaks
- Top Loin Steaks, aka NY Strip Steaks
- Porterhouse/T-bone Steaks

Beef's best friend: The Grill.

Even if you're comfortable with grilling beef, these four tips will enhance the flavor and ensure desired tenderness:

- To check the temperature on a charcoal or gas grill, cautiously hold the palm of your hand above the cooking grid at cooking height. Count the number of seconds you can hold your hand in that position before the heat forces you to pull it away. Medium heat is the optimal temperature; you should be able to hold your hand as instructed for about 4 seconds.
- Get your zest on! Season beef directly from the refrigerator with your favorite herbs or spices before placing on the grid.
- Turn beef only occasionally during cooking. Tongs are the best tool for turning steaks. Stay away from any kind of fork; piercing the meat leads to loss of all those precious juices.
- Season with salt after cooking if desired; adding salt before cooking can dry out beef.

Courtesy of The Beef Checkoff

Pan-Frying

You can pan-fry *Full Circle Natural Angus*[®] beef. Use these cuts for simple stovetop preparation:

- Ribeye Steaks (bone in and boneless)
- Tenderloin Steaks, aka Filet Mignon
- Top Sirloin Steaks
- Top Loin Steaks, aka NY Strip Steaks
- Porterhouse/T-bone Steaks

Trust us. This will be spectacular.

Follow these easy tips for supreme skillet steak:

- Before adding beef, heat a nonstick skillet for 5 minutes over medium heat.
- Season beef directly from the refrigerator with your favorite herbs and spices before placing in the preheated skillet.
- Do not overcrowd beef in the skillet.
- Do not add oil or water.
- Do not cover.
- If the cut is 1 inch or thicker, turn it occasionally.

Courtesy of The Beef Checkoff

Broiling

Broiling indoors is so easy you will regret not trying it earlier. Use any of these *Full Circle Natural Angus*[®] beef cuts under the broiler:

- Ribeye Steaks (bone in and boneless)
- Tenderloin Steaks, aka Filet Mignon
- Top Sirloin Steaks
- Top Loin Steaks, aka NY Strip steaks
- Porterhouse/T-bone Steaks

Atomic heat makes perfect meat.

Follow these steps to reward yourself with a tasty steak:

- Set your oven to broil and preheat for 10 minutes.
- Remove beef from refrigerator and season with herbs or spices.
- Place beef on the rack of the broiler pan.
- Turn once while broiling, when the first side reaches a deep, golden brown.
- After cooking, season with salt if desired.

Courtesy of The Beef Checkoff

Roasting

If you're expecting a full house, an *Full Circle Natural Angus*[®] beef roast is the perfect choice for a Sunday afternoon with friends and family. We recommend these cuts when cooking for a crowd:

- Tenderloin Roast
- Rib Roast
- Ribeye Roast
- Tri-Tip Roast
- Round Tip Roast

The edible centerpiece

Feed the masses without the stress. Follow these steps for a perfect entrée:

- Directly from the refrigerator, place the roast fat side up on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. If you're using a rib roast, you won't need a rack because the ribs form a natural rack.
- Season the roast with the herbs and spices you like the most.
- To determine when the roast is done, insert an ovenproof meat thermometer so the tip is centered in the thickest part of the roast. Don't rest the thermometer in fat or let it touch the bone.
- Resist the temptation to add water or cover.

Courtesy of The Beef Checkoff

Braising

If time is on your side, this technique can offer quite a flavorful payoff. These cuts of *Full Circle Natural Angus*[®] beef are the ones you want for braising:

- Round Roast
- Beef Brisket

Braising a new frontier

In some circles, braising is considered to be the ultimate way to cook beef. You can braise like a professional chef with these steps:

- Slowly brown beef on all sides in a small amount of oil in a heavy pan over medium heat.
- Pour off the drippings.
- Season with the herbs or spices you desire.
- Add a small amount (1/2 to 2 cups) of liquid. It can be broth, water, juice, beer or wine.
- Cover tightly and simmer gently over low heat on range top or in a preheated 325° F oven.
- Beef should be fork-tender when done.
- To reduce or thicken cooking liquid, bring to a boil; then simmer until it reaches the desired thickness.

Courtesy of The Beef Checkoff

Slow Cooking

You may think slow cookers lost their popularity. However, this handy kitchen appliance makes a juicy, delicious meal and frees up your day. Put one of these cuts of *Full Circle Natural Angus*[®] beef in a slow cooker and come home to greatness:

- Chuck Pot Roast
- Round Roast
- Beef Brisket

Meat that cooks itself

The beauty of a slow cooker is that you can make an entire meal for several people without spending the day in the kitchen. Follow these steps for an easy meal:

- Place chopped vegetables (potatoes, carrots, onions and celery) on the bottom of a 4-½ to 5-½-quart slow cooker.
- Place the vegetables on the bottom and sides so they are closer to the heat source because they tend to cook more slowly than meat in the slow cooker.
- You can add beef cut into 1-inch pieces or you can drop in a whole pot roast.
- Place any additional vegetables, liquid and seasonings on top.
- Make sure the ingredients fill the slow cooker at least half full so the foods cook properly and the liquid does not cook away.
- Cover and cook on HIGH for 5 to 6 hours or on LOW for 8 to 9 hours, or until beef is fork-tender.
- You may be tempted to remove the slow cooker lid during cooking. Don't do this unless the recipe directs you to add ingredients or stir because the heat loss caused by removing the lid unnecessarily can result in extra cooking time.

You should always check the manufacturer's directions for specific cookery information. Cooking times are guidelines; each slow cooker varies, and power fluctuations may occur. Follow recipes to determine whether to cook on low or high setting.

Courtesy of The Beef Checkoff

Meat & Fire: The Secret is the Wood ***The first in a series of grilling techniques***

by Chef Mario Valdovinos

Few activities let me connect to my inner “grill maestro” more than outdoor grilling. Cooking outdoors allows me to add bold flavor to my favorite “flame-kissed” foods in the form of smoke. My taste buds rely on the smoke that rises from small flare-ups from dripping marinade or melting meat fat. For some foods, charcoal smoke isn’t enough and I use wood chips or chunks, dried herbs, tea, or whole spices to add even more layers of flavor.

Even this California kid knows that he can start a smoke war between grilling die-hards from Texas & North Carolina about which type of wood smoke is best. But one thing we can all agree on is the aroma of wood smoke makes your neighbors want to tear down your fence and get to that stack of grilled meat piled on your outdoor grilling altar.

With that said, hickory, mesquite, oak, and pecan have very pronounced wood flavors and are my grilling staples. Some of my other BBQ Brethren tell me that apple, cherry, and beech produce a milder, fruity smoke, while alder has the least assertive wood flavor. One thing I learned a long time ago is that high-resin soft woods like pine should NEVER be used, because the smokey taste is... I’ll just say NOT so tasty.

I like the classic throwback to the charcoal grill and I soak wood chips, herbs, or whole spices in water for 30 minutes, then drain them before using. I don’t soak wood or aromatics if using my gas grill, as they are difficult to ignite and stay lit for a long period of time.

Use the chart below to create some killer grilled dishes of your own and enjoy the thrill of the grill!

Wood for Grilling

Wood Varieties	Chicken	Beef	Pork	Seafood	Game
<i>Apple Wood Chips</i>	X		X	X	
<i>Cherry Wood Chips</i>	X			X	
<i>Golden Alder Wood Chips</i>				X	X
<i>Hickory Wood Chips</i>	X		X		
<i>Mesquite Wood Chips</i>	X	X	X		X
<i>Northern Beech Nut</i>			X		
<i>Northern White Cedar</i>	X	X		X	
<i>Oak Wood Chips</i>		X	X		
<i>Pecan Wood Chips</i>	X		X		
<i>Sugar Maple</i>	X		X		X

Meat & Fire: Marinating Makes the Difference
The second in a series of grilling techniques

by Chef Mario Valdovinos

How do you transform an already-great cut of meat into something even more perfect? For me, it's marinating. Marinating is the easy way to elevate the taste of grilled foods with just a few simple ingredients and a little bit of time.

My most basic marinades always combine these home pantry ingredients: oil, an acid, and fresh herbs or dry seasonings. I like to use olive, canola or grape seed oil to help protect the surface of the food while grilling and carry the flavor of robust spices, fresh herbs and other aromatics. My favorite marinade acids include wine, balsamic vinegar, Greek yogurt and citrus fruit. These acids mixed in marinades tenderize meat while adding bright, fresh flavors to beef, pork, chicken and vegetables. I make sure not to use too much acid, because this can produce mushy meat. When I'm in the ethnic food mood, I use seasonings like garlic, onion, ginger, lemongrass, tamarind, kimchee, curry, rosemary and cumin seed to create interesting flavor combinations that stimulate the taste buds. Be creative -- your guests will love trying to guess your secret ingredients!

Always use a nonreactive mixing container, such as a glass or stainless steel bowl, or a sealable plastic bag when mixing a marinade. Plus, a little liquid goes a long way -- I use small amounts of marinade to coat food, so the food's natural taste can still be the hero.

Marinating times vary from 30 minutes for small pieces of beef, pork or chicken to 3 days for larger cuts of meat, like roasts. When marinating for longer than 30 minutes, always cover and refrigerate the food.

The final step I like to take before grilling is to pat the meat dry. Surface moisture prevents searing and even browning.

I hope these tips help you create fantastic marinades at home that take your next grilled feast up a notch or two!