



A Quick Guide to Easy Steak Substitutions

Steaks can be cut from just about any muscle on a beef animal. Depending on the muscle, you'll experience differences in texture, tenderness, and flavor. Texture has the most to do with the **type** of muscle whereas tenderness is related to how extensively the muscle was **used**. Well-exercised muscles tend to be leaner and less tender. Both tenderness and flavor are influenced by fat content. Higher levels of fat are associated with increased tenderness and flavor. *Interestingly, flavor is typically enhanced in muscles that do a lot of work so there is a bit of a trade-off between flavor and tenderness.*

Easy Substitutions: What do you do when you have a menu in mind but don't have the steak cut called for in the recipe? Here are some basic substitutions.

Cuts	Substitutes	Notes
Ribeye		Higher fat, relatively tender, typically served center of the plate.
	Chuckeye	Very similar to ribeye, full of flavor.
	New York Strip	Very similar to ribeye, typically a little leaner.
Tenderloin		Prized for leanness and tenderness (but not flavor); great for thin-slicing or serving center of the plate for a special occasion.
	Petite Tender	More affordable option that shares tenderness & lean qualities of tenderloin
Flat Iron	Tri-Tip, Sirloin	Modest fat, tender, great grilled or pan-fried, take well to marinades.
Flank	Hanger, Skirt, Bavette	Ropy texture, relatively lean & tender, best grilled, take well to marinades, perfect for quick meals and fajitas.
London Broil		This cut can be taken from any muscle. We take it from the Top Round, which is typically lean; it can be grilled or roasted but remember not to over cook it!
	Denver	Small, lean steak that is more tender than the eye of round but less tender than the chuck eye.
	Eye of Round	Leanest type of steak; appreciated for its small size and price point.

Tips for Preparing Pasture-Raised Steaks

Cooking steak is easy, but can turn on you quickly if you're not paying attention. There are three major considerations for cooking steaks that, if followed, will generally yield great results.

Preparation: Meat cooks more evenly if it has been brought up to, or close to, room temperature. Pull your steak out of the refrigerator at least 15 minutes ahead of time so it has some time to warm up before you cook it.

Seasoning: Salt is your friend. And steaks tastes much better when the salt can actually start to penetrate the meat as opposed to just sitting on the surface. Too much salt isn't fun, but if you apply it to the meat in the first few minutes after taking it out of the refrigerator, your steak will be nicely seasoned.

Resting: If you only pay attention to one rule for cooking steaks, it should be this one. When you cook ANY meat, let it rest before you cut into it. A small piece of steak should rest for at least 5 minutes while a larger piece of meat, like a whole tri tip, should rest at least 10 minutes. Resting allows the juices to settle down, cool off a bit, and to be re-absorbed into the meat. If you cut into a steak that hasn't been rested, the juices pour out, you lose a lot of flavor, and you'll probably end up with meat that is tougher than it needs to be. Here are the recommended temperatures for removing your steaks away from heat. *(Remember, they will keep cooking as they rest.)*

125 for medium rare 130 for medium 140 for medium well done

Deciding which cooking method to use really just comes down to whether you have a grill and want to use it or would prefer to stay indoors. Here are the basic options:

Pan Frying – You can get flavor pan frying if you aren't afraid to use a little melted fat (e.g., butter) and if you focus on getting a good sear on your steak. The myth that a good sear locks meat juices inside the steak is actually incorrect. However a good sear does make your steak taste better. The key is to get your pan "screaming hot!" The other advantage of searing your steak quickly is that it ensures you obtain the sear without cooking the meat too long on one side. If you cook your meat too long on one side, when you flip it, the other side has already become over done.

Grilling - Putting steaks on the grill when the coals are super hot is a sure fire way to over cook your meat, and it happens fast! Let your coals get medium hot before you throw your meat on. With grilling, the name of the game is indirect heat. Because the meat is exposed to open flame, it will sear fine wherever the steak is positioned on the grill. Indirect cooking avoids flare-ups due to fat dripping on the coals, thus burning your meat. It also cooks the meat more evenly.

Sear & Bake – Don't have a grill? Bad weather outside? Try the following. First, sear your steak in a pan and then immediately put your steaks in an oven-proof pan into a pre-heated oven (400 degrees or thereabouts). Bake for a few minutes or until your steak gets within 10 degrees of desired doneness.