

# UNDERBELLY

## Steak

### Standard Method, for steaks 1" to 1-1/2" thick

- remove meat from fridge. lightly season with salt and pepper, and leave uncovered at room temp for an hour or so. pat dry with paper towels shortly before cooking.
  - heat saute pan on very high heat. water sprinkled on pan should bounce and leap. pan should fit the meat closely, without crowding.
  - have steak ready. oil pan with a refined, high heat oil, like sunflower, safflower, or grapeseed, and drop steak in as soon as it coats the bottom.
  - brown the meat thoroughly, about 2 to 3 minutes on each side
  - of a lot of rendered fat has accumulated, pour off the excess
  - turn down heat to low. when pan has cooled to the point where butter won't burn, add whole, unsalted butter (about 2TB/lb of steak).
  - baste steak with butter for 2 to 5 minutes, and move steak around in pan to keep bottom coated. Flip at least once, to try to keep temperature gradient symmetrical. check temperature frequently with a finger. The thicker the steak and more cooked you want the center, the longer you need to cook on low heat. butter should brown, but make sure it doesn't darken beyond medium brown.
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### Ducasse Method, for steaks 1-1/2" or more thick (ideally steaks should have a generous outer layer of fat and be exceptionally well marbled)

- remove meat from fridge. lightly season with salt and pepper, and leave uncovered at room temp for an hour or so. pat dry with paper towels shortly before cooking.
  - heat saute pan on medium heat. water sprinkled on pan should sizzle but not jump.
  - balance steak on its edge in pan (choosing a fatty edge), and cook on medium heat for about 10 minutes, to render fat.
  - flip to the first large flat side, and brown, also roughly 10 minutes. pour excess rendered fat out of pan. add butter to pan (about 1TB / lb steak) and baste while cooking. pour out butter if it starts to overbrown.
  - flip to the final flat side and brown, also about 10 minutes. add more butter and baste while cooking. pour out butter if it starts to overbrown.
  - (optional: add garlic or other aromatics to the butter as it melts)
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### All Pan Methods

- for rare steaks internal temperature should be 120 degrees F, to rise to 125 or so degrees while resting.
- for medium rare, cook longer while basting with the butter. internal temperature should be 125 degrees, to rise to 130 or so while resting.

- remove to well heated plate (170 degrees or so) tented lightly with foil in a warm (but not hot) place.
  - rest ten minutes for normal steaks (under 1-1/2"), up to 15 minutes for very thick ones.
  - steaks with a tough grain, like hanger, should then be sliced thin across the grain, on a bias.
  - serve steaks on fresh warmed plates (the plate used for resting will lose too much heat).
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### Sous Vide

(best for cooking large quantities. best method for zero gradient)

-for rare steaks set immersion circulator to 53°–54°C / 127°–129°F

-for medium-rare steaks set immersion circulator to 55°–56°C / 131°–133°F

(higher temp for tougher cuts like hanger. since there is no gradient, and since sous vide brightens the color of the meat, generally use the upper end of the temperature range for rare)

- cut steaks to 1.5" thickness. salt, pepper, and rub with 1TB of cultured butter (optional) before bagging\*
- cook tender cuts for approximately 2 hours. If cooking rare, do not cook / hold longer than 4 hours—you are

below the pasteurization temperature. for medium-rare, you can hold indefinitely, but tenderizing may lead to mushiness beyond 3 hours.

-for tougher cuts like skirt and hanger, cook medium rare (56°C) for 3 hours or longer.

-unbag. **dry the surfaces.** brush with a maillarding solution (1.5g dextrose, 0.5g sodium bicarbonate in 100g water).

-brown, either in a deep fryer or on an oiled pan / griddle heated to approx. 200°–260C / 400°–500°F (Preheat to high range; pan temp will drop) 30–60 seconds per side

-no need to rest before slicing / plating

\*If bagging in ziplocks, use ziplock freezer bags, and prepare a beurre monté water to seal gaps in bag. approximately 1/2 oz butter and 1-1/2 oz water per steak. salt beurre monté until it has a prominent salt flavor (but do not make strong like brine).

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## DONENESS

**Rare:** 120° to 129°F / 49° to 53.8°C

center is bright red, pinkish toward the exterior portion

**poke test:** lightly press thumb to index finger. compare firmness of lower part of thumb flexor muscle to meat.

**Medium Rare:** 130° to 135°F / 54° to 57°C

center is very pink, slightly brown toward the exterior

**poke test:** lightly press thumb to 2nd finger.

**Medium:** 140° to 145°F / 60° to 63°C

center is light pink, outer portion is brown

**poke test:** lightly press thumb to 3rd finger.

(other poke tests: 4th finger = well done. relaxed hand = uncooked  
beware that with long browning, the crust can be thick enough to make poking unreliable. then you're on your own. thermometers are hard to use on all but the thickest steaks.)

**Cuts** (in order of preference):

Rib Steak (bone in), Rib eye (boneless), Top Loin (NY Strip / Shell), Flatiron, Hanger. Thick rib eye (côte de beef) is ideal for Ducasse method.

## Quality

Steaks should be dry aged and well marbled. Cuts from large primals should be aged a minimum of 3 weeks. 4 to 6 weeks is better; it will develop the deeper aged flavors. 8+ weeks creates an unusual intensity of aged flavor. Small cuts (fillet, hanger) can only handle a short period aging. Work it out with butcher. Steaks should be well marbled; at the high end of prime. Artisanal beef that's been finished on a combination of grass and grains can get away with less marbling, but should still make the prime grade.