



DORY'S DIARY

DOROTHY SWART FLESHMAN

Nature's climate control

Here I am back again after the skipped week in-between, so I hope you are here again, too.

Because of your response, it is amazing to me how one little act of hanging the wash outside on a clothesline to dry still connects so many persons to this old-time way of doing things. It can be to oneself one's mother, grandmother, aunt, or friend, but the sight of the items of wear or household use flapping in the breeze on the line or smelling their goodness as armloads are retrieved to the house again on regular occasion still cling in memory to many.

It was a simple thing in that it served a necessary purpose, for we hadn't yet discovered a machine to do the job for us. At least not in the normal everyday household. At least that's how it was in our town during my years of growing up and continuing on this necessary tradition by choice.

If the present laundry room no longer houses the old wringer-type wash-machine, rinse tubs, straw carrying baskets, or clothes pocket aprons filled with clothes pins in favor of sleek-looking automatic machines for both washing and drying, there is still a memory connection that links our generations. Hopefully it no longer has to include our memories of scrubbing on a ridged washboard or doing it by hand in the bathtub or even by the one-sheet-at-a-time in the Montgomery Ward tub with an attachable motor on top of the lid.

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BETWEEN THE ROWS

WENDY SCHMIDT

Handle with care

Handle toxic chemicals with extreme care. If you wonder about their toxicity — if you find this on the label, the probably lethal* amount is:

1. DANGER, POISON: A few drops to a teaspoon. Avoid if possible.
2. WARNING: Over a teaspoon, up to an ounce.
3. CAUTION: Over an ounce, up to a pint.

*Estimated lethal dose levels for a man weighing 150 pounds based on oral, dermal, or respiratory exposure.

ESSENTIAL RULES FOR TOXIC SUBSTANCE SAFETY

- Always store pesticides in the original, labeled container.
- Read the label every time you use a chemical — it tells you what precautions to take, how to use it, when to use it, and what to use it on.
- Do NOT spray if the weather is windy. You, wildlife, or surrounding areas can become contaminated with pesticides from drift.
- Do not spray pesticides into and NEVER discard containers or empty spray tank remnants into ponds, streams, lakes, or waterways.

Accidents don't "just happen," but if this should occur, take proper precautionous action AT ONCE:

- Remove any contaminated clothing immediately, and be careful not to spread any of the contamination.
- Wash the contaminated area thoroughly with plenty of soap and water IMMEDIATELY. This is especially important if a concentrated formulation is being used.

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Getting The Most Sizzle From Your Steak



Grilling a steak to perfection.

Dreamtime-TNS

MASTER OF THE GRILL

By Daniel Neman
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Hamburgers, hot dogs and chicken are fine in their way, but when it comes time for grilling, only one meat is king: steak.

But steak can be intimidating. So we have compiled a primer about steak, the basic information you need to grill a steak to perfection.

David Marren, executive chef of the Ruth's Chris Steak House in Clayton, Mo., said that steak is prized most for two attributes: How tender it is, and how much fat it has. In steak, fat is a good thing. "Most of the flavor comes from the fat," he said.

Cuts of meat

Perhaps the most famous cut of steak, the tenderloin or filet mignon is also the most tender. "If they're tender enough, you can almost cut them with a fork," said Steve Waack, managing partner of the LongHorn Steak house in St. Peters.

The meat is so soft because it comes from a part of the cow, just below the backbone, that does not get much work. It is also particularly lean, so it does not get the benefit (as well as the calories) that comes from fat. Extra flavor often comes from a strip of bacon wrapped around it, or a sauce.

In contrast, the ribeye is prized because it has so much fat — and therefore so much flavor. Cut from a little-worked muscle just outside the rib cage, it too, is quite tender.

The tenderness also comes from the little seams of fat that run through the meat, which is called marbling. Because no one likes to eat undercooked fat, many experts recommend ordering a ribeye at least medium rare or warmer.

If steak is the king of the grill, then porterhouse is the king of steak. It's two cuts in one, a strip steak on one side of a t-shaped bone and a tenderloin on the other. The bone is important because it imparts even more flavor to the meat on both sides.

Porterhouses are large — by definition, the tenderloin part has to measure at least 1 1/4 inches across. The smaller version of a porterhouse is the familiar T-bone, which just has more of a hint of a tenderloin. It is the same

cut as the porterhouse, but it comes from the part of the loin that is closer to the animal's head, where the tenderloin is more narrow.

The cut on the other side of the T-bone, the New York strip, which is also just called the strip steak, has seen a recent surge in popularity because it provided a hearty beefiness and a satisfyingly dense chew with a relatively low cost.

Of course, the popularity of the steak increased the demand, which in turn increased the cost.

Sirloin "comes from the very top of the cow, it's right by the rump," Marren said. It is less tender than other steaks without being tough, and, almost by way of compensation, "it has more of a robust flavor," Waack said.

Even with the big, beefy taste, it often remains the least expensive steak.

Flank steak and skirt steak are from two different parts of the cow, but most cooks think of them interchangeably. Both are especially good when marinated, both should be cooked over high heat for a short period of time and both are very tough; the only way to make them reasonably tender is to cut them in thin slices against the grain of the meat.

"You've got to know how to cut on the bias. That's the most important part of it," Marren said.

Grading

The United States Department of Agriculture inspects and grades the vast majority of beef sold in this country, about 96 percent of it. Grocery stores, butchers and restaurants are not required to say what grade meat they are selling, but many do.

Prime beef "is the Mercedes of the beef," Marren said. Only 2 percent of beef is graded prime, and most of that goes to high-end restaurants. It comes from young — and therefore tender — cattle that have been well fed. The meat will have abundant marbling, giving it extra texture and tenderness.

Choice beef is also high-quality meat, though less marbled and less tender than prime. Choice steaks are great for high-heat cooking, but, according to Marren, "when you get to the other parts, like the rump and the

round, it dries out quickly and it's easy to overcook."

Select is lean and still relatively tender, but it will be less juicy than the higher grades of meat.

There are lower grades of beef, too. Standard and commercial grades are sometimes sold as a store's own brand, but the packaging will probably never acknowledge these lower, undesirable grades. Below commercial are utility, cutter and canner grades, which basically never make it to a store's meat department except as ground beef.

Dog food has to come from somewhere.

Cooking tips

The pros grill their steaks at high heat, sometimes very high heat. Ruth's Chris uses specially designed grills that are a mind-blowing 1,800 degrees.

Your grill won't do that. Waack suggests using a grill at between 500 and 550 degrees; Marren says to cook at least 450 degrees. "If you can't put your hand over it for 1 second, that's hot enough," Marren said.

"Don't be shy about putting on the seasoning," Waack said. Both chefs recommended using plenty of salt, plus pepper and garlic, either granulated (Waack) or fresh (Marren). Marren suggests salting the meat as much as a full day before cooking, to bring the juice to the edges of the meat where it will contribute to a great crust when seared.

The grill should be clean and lightly oiled before starting. Marren likes to prepare the grill with one side extra-hot for searing, a hot section next to that for cooking and a warm portion next to that where the meat can rest and redistribute its juices after it is cooked.

A rare steak, with a cool, red center, should be cooked to a temperature of 95 to 105 degrees, Waack said. For medium rare, cook it from 115 to 125 degrees. Medium is 130 to 140 degrees. Medium-well is 150 to 160 degrees. And well-done will be 165 to 175 degrees.

But remember, the meat will continue to cook once it is off the grill. According to Marren, "it will rise about 5 to 7 degrees, so always go a little bit undercooked."

Top crops: Berry-based ice cream topping

By Joe Gray
Chicago Tribune

Strawberries, cherries, apricots, peaches, nectarines, blueberries — the confluence of summer fruit seasons creates one of the most magical culinary moments of the year.

Here we've given them a stage worthy of their glory: as magical toppings for ice cream, that other summer star. With complementary flavors — chocolate for cherries, ginger and cardamom for apricots — and techniques bor-

rowed from many disciplines — a shrub, a chutney, a compote — the gems of orchards and berry patches take on savory elements to transform into something even better, if that's possible. It is.

Each recipe is simple enough to throw together for a last-minute party dessert and can be made with ingredients on hand. Serve over vanilla ice cream, or experiment with other flavor pairings. Break them out all summer long, while the harvest lasts.

APRICOT CHUTNEY

Prep: 10 minutes
Cook: 12 minutes
Makes: 2 cups

If using fresh ginger instead of crystallized, add some sugar to taste.

1 tablespoon canola or grapeseed oil
Half a small onion, finely chopped (about 1/2 cup)

Kosher salt

2 tablespoons finely chopped crystallized ginger (or 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger)
1 to 2 green cardamom pods, husked, seeds crushed
1 teaspoon finely chopped jalapeno, optional
3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
1/4 cup fresh orange juice
3 large fresh apricots, pitted, chopped (about 2 cups)
1/2 cup golden raisins

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