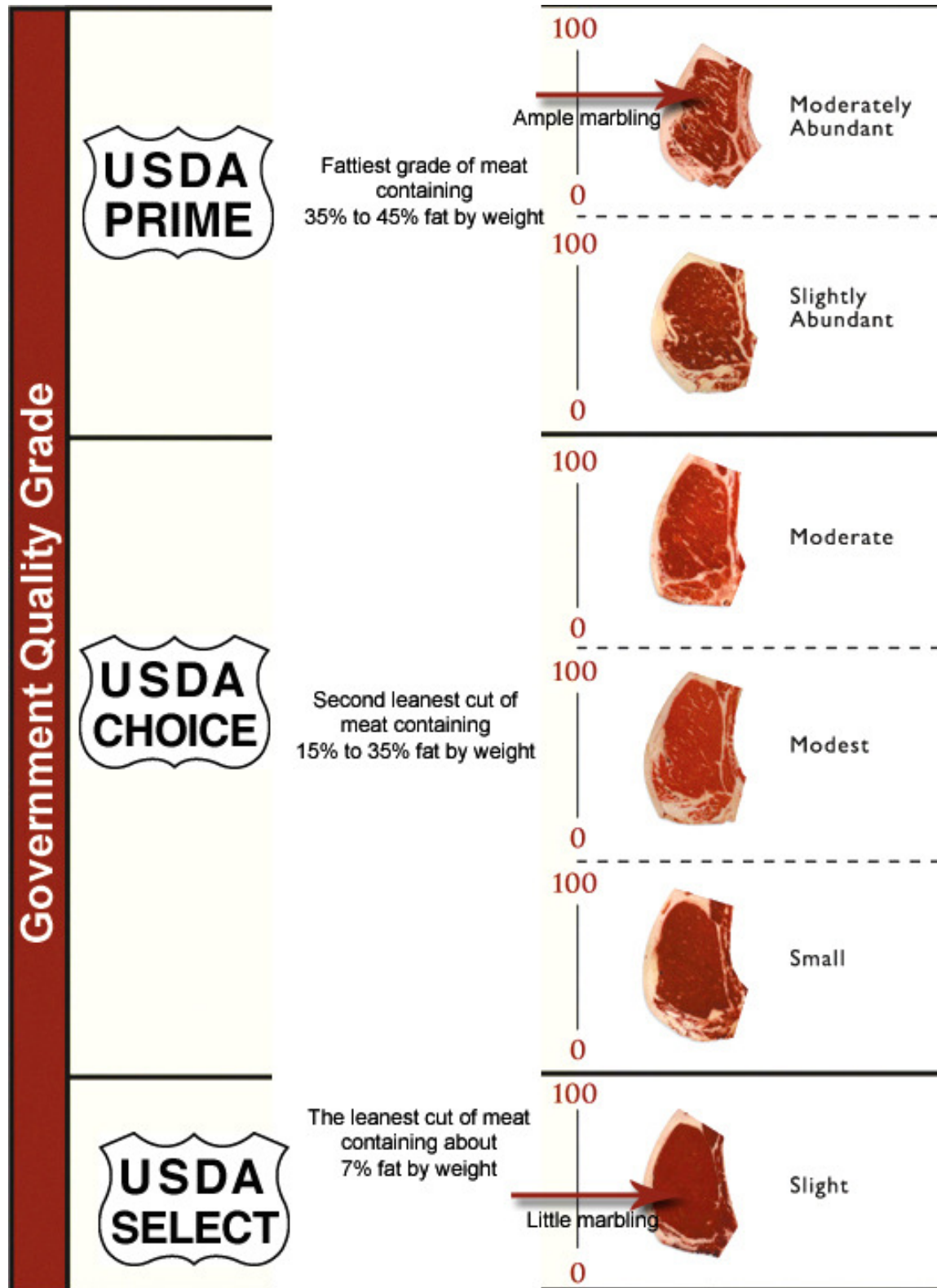


Choosing the Right Meat to Eat
Christopher Theberge, RD

Meat is naturally high in fat and cholesterol given that animal tissue is marbled with fat and cholesterol is part of the cellular membrane. Therefore, no matter how much we trim meats, it is virtually impossible to get rid of the fat.



One of the issues with meat is that about 50% of the fat it contains is the type that raises cholesterol—saturated fat. Beef contains more saturated fat than poultry or fish because of the natural hydrogenation of plant fats ingested by ruminants. It should be noted that saturated fat and trans-fat raise cholesterol more than cholesterol raises cholesterol.

Tips on Trimming the Fat

Usually the higher the price, the fattier the meat will be. Marbling is what gives meat the “melt in your mouth” feeling. The chart above is a visual representation of how the USDA grades meat.

Fat content varies with different cuts of meat and grades. Below are several cuts of select-grade beef ranked in order from lowest to highest fat content.

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Top Round | 9. T-Bone |
| 2. Eye of Round | 10. Tenderloin |
| 3. Round Tip | 11. Porterhouse |
| 4. Bottom Round | 12. Brisket |
| 5. Shank | 13. Rib-Eye |
| 6. Sirloin | 14. Flank |
| 7. Arm | 15. Ribs |
| 8. Top Loin | 16. Blade |

Eat Lean

The leanest types of meat include game meats such as venison, rabbit, and ostrich. Pork has a history of being ousted as a nutritional “no-no”, but this is not always the case. The pork industry has made improvements in the last few years to develop leaner cuts. Pork still does not pack as much nutrition compared to other cuts of beef; however, most of the fat in pork can be trimmed. Be careful of fatty pork products such as hotdogs, sausage, and bacon which contain a lot of saturated fat and nitrates.

Cook Lean

The healthiest way to cook meat is where the fat is able to drip off such as with broiling or grilling. Roasting and baking are also good methods because there is no fat added; however, fatty cuts may end up reabsorbing the fat during cooking.

Cook Safely

Whatever meat you decide to cook and method you use to prepare it, you must practice food safety. Below is a brief list of cooking temperatures to abide by.

Ground Meat and Meat Mixtures: Ground beef, pork, veal, lamb -- 160 °F Ground turkey, chicken -- 165 °F	Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb: Medium rare -- 145 °F Medium -- 160 °F Well Done -- 170 °F
Poultry: Chicken & Turkey, whole -- 180 °F Poultry breasts, roast -- 170 °F Poultry thighs, wings, legs -- 180 °F Duck & Goose -- 180 °F Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird) -- 165 °F	Fresh Pork: Medium -- 160 °F Well Done -- 170 °F