

Guide to Buying Meat in Bulk Directly From Farms and Ranches

Beef

Why Buy in Bulk?

If you have storage space and the funds to purchase upfront, buying meat in bulk (often in the form of livestock "shares") can be a rewarding, cost-effective way to buy from a farmer or rancher you trust. It allows you to try cuts you might not otherwise get, and saves you a bunch of trips to the butcher. But, it does require a little planning.

How Much Should I Buy?

First, you'll need to think about how much meat your household consumes in order to find the right size share. To do so, use our simple guide.




Which Beef Share is Right For Me?

So you've settled on buying a beef share from a local farmer or rancher. Now you need to decide which share to buy. Bulk beef is typically sold as a whole, half, or quarter share, and some farmers and ranchers even offer an eighth share.

Ask your farmer or rancher what share sizes are available—you can always try a smaller share at first and see if it works with the way you and your family cook. Remember that buying in bulk means you'll get a variety of cuts from each animal. You may not be used to cooking with some of these cuts. We'll get into that more in the next section.

HOW MUCH MEAT DO YOU EAT?



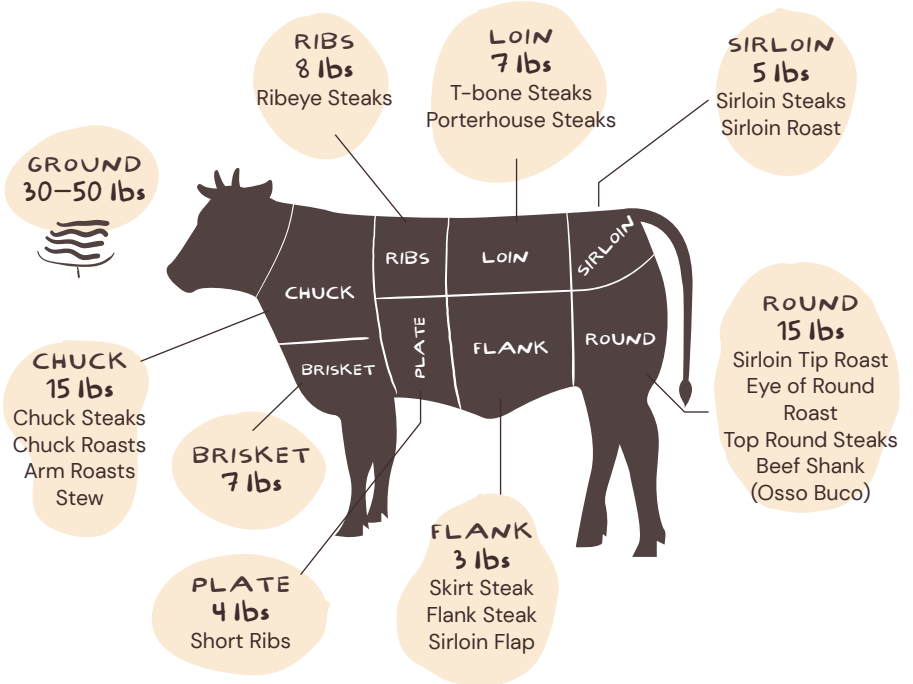
BEEF SHARE			
live weight 900-1300 lbs	WHOLE BEEF	1/2 BEEF	1/4 BEEF
Hanging (carcass) weight	550-800 lbs	275-400 lbs	140-200 lbs
Edible meat yield	300-500 lbs	150-250 lbs	75-125 lbs

*These numbers will vary depending on production practices and breeds.

APPROXIMATE MEAT YIELD FROM 1/4 BEEF

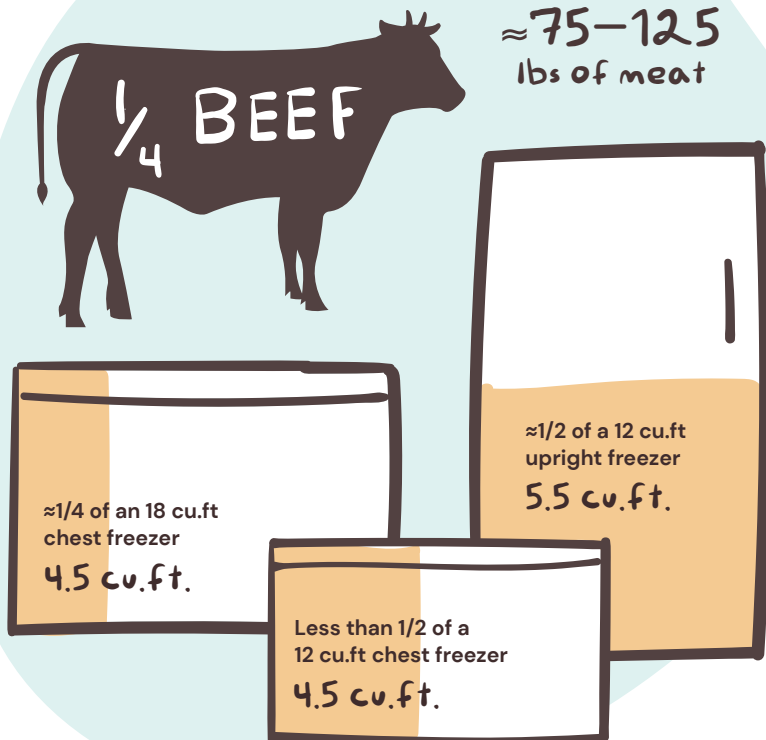
What Will I Get?

The exact cuts you'll receive in a farm-direct bulk buy will depend on your farmer or rancher, your butcher, and what you request. Check out the graphics on this page for a general idea.



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HOW MUCH SPACE IS NEEDED?



Where Do I Store All This Meat?

For some shares, you'll be able to store the meat in a regular-sized freezer in your home fridge. For larger shares, you might want to purchase another freezer. These freezers can often be purchased used, for a fair price, if you're on the lookout.

How will this work, and what will it cost me?

When buying meat in bulk, you're buying a "share" of a live animal. You will pay two parties: the **farmer or rancher** and the **butcher**.

The **farmer or rancher** will charge you based on the weight of the animal after slaughter (aka "hanging" or "carcass" weight), which includes bones and fat that will be trimmed away later.

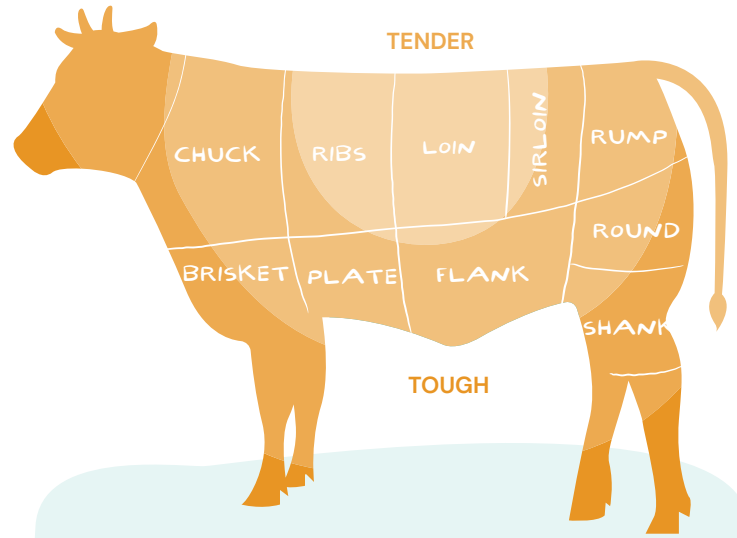
The **butcher** will charge you a "slaughter fee" and a "cut-and-wrap" fee. You'll fill out a "cut sheet," which tells the butcher which cuts you prefer, like steaks, roasts, bone-in or boneless, ground, etc. The more specific your requests, the higher the fee.

How Do I Cook All of This?

Great question! Buying meat in bulk normally means getting some cuts you're unfamiliar with, and that's part of the fun.

Here's the gist. Cuts generally fall into two categories: **tender and quick-cooking** and **tougher and slow-cooking**. Which category a cut falls into depends on where the muscle is on the animal and how much the animal used it.

Remember, all cuts will taste delicious if you know how to cook them. Knowing just a bit about each cut will help you to improvise in the kitchen and get creative. The cheat sheet on this page might be all you need. For more in-depth tips, check out www.goodmeatproject.org/breakdown.



QUICK-COOKING METHODS

Best for cuts that are tender or thinner.

Broil	High heat source above the meat
Grill	Dry and high heat, with charcoal or gas
Pan-Fry	Meat is seared and flipped in a pan
Pan-Roast	Meat is seared, then cooked in the oven

SLOW-COOKING METHODS

Best for cuts that are tougher or thicker.

Barbecue	Low and slow, with either moist or dry heat
Braise	Low and slow on the stove or in the oven, partially submerged in a liquid like wine or stock
Roast	Dry heat in the oven, uncovered