

RUSTON'S

BONEYARD

TOP FIVE TIPS FOR

STEAK



Jack Ruston

TIP ONE

SEASON GENEROUSLY

When we talk about seasoning, **we're talking about salt**. Forget complex, cleverly-marketed, spiced rubs - they're just masking the true flavour of the meat. Salt, on the other hand, opens up our taste buds, enhancing the wonderful, pure flavours that are already there in the beef. It melds into the crust of the steak, lending every mouthful a deep intensity.

You can use a finely-ground salt, rolled flakes or crystals. It's a matter of preference. But **be generous** - the chances are that you're under-seasoning. The trick is to find the point at which the flavour of the steak is maximised, without the seasoning becoming too much.

A thicker steak can take more salt than a thinner one, because the ratio of seasoned surface to unseasoned interior is lower. A grilled, or barbecued steak can take more than meat cooked in a skillet, because some is lost through the cooking grate.

Season immediately before cooking.



TIP TWO

GET THE HEAT RIGHT

Steak cookery is all about the magical balance between a **crisp, intense crust**, and the desired level of **doneness**. We need to apply heat in such a way that when we reach the target temperature for taking the steak off to rest, the crust is also perfect - the surface neither burned, nor underdone.

There are various factors that affect how much heat we need to apply, when, and for how long. The most important of these are **thickness** and **starting temperature** of the meat. Match the heat, and the method to the characteristics of the steak.

TIP THREE

USE A PROBE

Assess the level of doneness by checking the **internal temperature** of the meat using a **quick-reading, folding probe**. The use of specific timings, or the 'thumb squidginess test' amounts to guesswork. To cook a steak perfectly, know the internal temperature.

All steaks will continue to cook as they rest, in a process known as carry-over cooking. Take the steak off the heat a few degrees shy of your final target temperatures. The amount of carry-over depends on various factors, including the **thickness** of the steak, and the cooking **method** used.

My recommendation:

[ETI Thermapen Mk4 Professional](#)



TIP FOUR

REST IT ON A RACK

When a piece of meat cooks, the **watery liquid** within the meat will get hot, and begin to move outwards to the surface. It should either instantly evaporate, or drip away through a cooking grate.

When we take the steak off to rest, liquid will continue to emerge for a few minutes, as the carry-over cooking runs its course. As there is now no hot fat, searing coals or cooking grate, it will **pool around the steak**, affecting the crust.

Always rest the steak on a roasting rack, thus allowing those emerging fluids to drip through.

TIP FIVE

CUT ACROSS THE GRAIN

Some steaks can have thick, **directional fibres** running through them, which are tough, and hard to chew. Bavette and rump (top sirloin in the U.S) are good examples.

Always ensure that you cut these more obvious fibres **across the grain**, ideally at 90°, with a sharp knife. This will shorten them, making each mouthful of steak tender, rather than tough. Sometimes you can't cut them at 90° because they run perpendicular to the long axis of the steak. In that case, we can slice the steak at an angle to the surface, cutting them at 45°.

Some steaks, like tri-tip, have fibres that **change direction**. The ever-popular ribeye can have dense, clearly directional fibres in the leaner, centre part of the eye, but a far more open texture in the outer section of the Spinalis Dorsi, or rib cap muscle. You may need to take this into account as you cut different sections of a steak.

Fillet (tenderloin in the U.S) has little in the way of tough fibres, and can usually be sliced in any direction, with much the same result.



FURTHER YOUR SKILLS

THE RUSTON'S BONEYARD GUIDE TO STEAK

For a detailed exploration of these points, and many more, get **The Ruston's Boneyard Guide To Steak** - a deep dive into every aspect of steak cookery. Packed with clear explanations, images, tips, and tricks, it's a meaty masterclass for those who want to develop a true understanding of the art and science of perfect steak.

Get it now at www.rustonsboneyard.com

