Although poultry and fish have stolen the spotlight as healthier protein sources, beef is still a very popular source of not only protein, but also iron, zinc, niacin, and vitamins B6 and B12. When eaten in reasonable portions and in balance with other foods, it is part of a healthy eating plan.

During the summer season, beef steaks are a favorite for grilling. But not all steak cuts are not equally tender; therefore, the type of steak should be well suited to the cooking method. Marinades may not only impart flavor but also help tenderize. Rubs, dry combinations of spices and herbs, however, are generally used only for flavor enhancements. A description of steaks from various parts of the carcass follow below:

**From the Chuck**

The Chuck Eye Steak, also called Boneless Chuck Fillet Steak, is boneless, flavorful and also tender. The chuck eye is tender because it is a continuation of the muscles in the rib eye which extend into the chuck.

The Chuck Shoulder Steak, also called London Broil, is a flavorful, boneless, less tender steak that requires marinating for tenderization. It is usually carved into thin slices.

The Shoulder Center Steak (Ranch Cut) is a lean, quick-cooking boneless steak that is juiciest and flavorful when cooked to medium rare (145 degrees F.) doneness.

The Shoulder Top Blade (Flat Iron) Steak is a boneless steak second only to the tenderloin in tenderness. And it is very flavorful.

**From the Rib**

The rib section provides the popular ribeye and rib steak. The ribeye does not contain the rib bone. This steak is juicy and flavorful with general marbling throughout. It is also called Beauty Steak, Delmonico Steak, or Spencer Steak.

Rib Steak (bone-in) is juicy and flavorful with generous marbling throughout.

**From the Short Loin**

The short loin produces some of the most tender steaks.

In the T-Bone/Porterhouse Steak, the T-shaped bone is the distinguishing characteristic of these premium steaks. Actually the T-Bone/Porterhouse is "two steaks in one", containing both top loin and tenderloin steaks. The difference between the T-Bone and Porterhouse is the size of the tenderloin. In the T-Bone, the diameter of the tenderloin muscle must be no less than 1 half inch; in the porterhouse, no less than 1 and one-fourth inches.

The Top Loin (Strip) Steak is a lean tender steak with full flavor and is sold both boneless and bone-in. It is also called Kansas City Steak, New York Strip Steak, Strip Steak (boneless), Delmonico, Shell Steak (bone-in) or Club Steak (boneless or bone-in).

Tenderloin Steak, also called Filet Mignon, is a boneless steak with mild flavor and has the distinction of being the most tender steak of all.

**From the Sirloin**

The top sirloin is usually carved into slices after cooking. It can be cut into strips for a stir-fry or for kabobs. It is also called Boneless Sirloin Butt Steak.

**From the Round**

Top Round Steak is a lean boneless steak but is a less tender cut, which benefits from a tenderizing marinade. Top Round is most flavorful cooked to an internal temperature of 145
degrees F. (medium rare). Serve carved into thin slices.

Round Tip Steak (thin cut) is boneless and very lean, and cooks in minutes. It is sometimes called sirloin tip steak, sandwich steak or breakfast steak. These steaks also can be cut into strips for stir-fry.

The Eye Round Steak is a boneless, very lean, less tender steak that benefits from a tenderizing marinade. For best results, cook just to 145 degrees F. (medium rare) and serve thinly sliced.

The Round (Sirloin) Tip Center Steak is an extra lean, boneless single portion steak. For optimal tenderness and flavor, cook to medium rare (145 degrees F.) doneness.

The Bottom Round (Western Griller) Steak is a very lean boneless steak requiring a tenderizing marinade. A family-sized steak, it offers great flavor at an affordable cost. Cook to medium rare (145 degrees F) doneness, and carve into thin slices for best flavor and tenderness.

**From the Plate and Flank**

From the animal's belly the skirt steak comes from the plate and the flank steak from the flank. Skirt steak is actually the diaphragm muscle that is cut into portions weighing about 1 and one half pounds each. This less tender cut benefits from a tenderizing marinade and should be carved across the grain into thin slices for serving. Skirt steak is the original cut used for fajitas and is also called Fajitas Meat or Philadelphia Steak.

The Flank Steak is a boneless, flat, oval-shaped steak with little fat, the original London Broil. As a less tender cut, flank steak benefits from a tenderizing marinade and should also be carved across the grain into thin slices for serving.

Source: NC Cattlemen's Beef Council

**Herbed Beef Tenderloin**

1 whole beef tenderloin (3 lbs.) trimmed  
2 teaspoons olive or canola oil  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
1 ½ teaspoons dried basil  
1 ½ teaspoons dried rosemary, crushed  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon pepper

Tie tenderloin at 2 inch intervals with kitchen string. Combine oil and garlic. Brush over meat. Combine the basil, rosemary, salt and pepper. Sprinkle evenly over meat. Place on a rack in shallow roasting pan. Bake, uncovered, at 425 degrees for 40 - 50 minutes or until meat reaches desired doneness. Let stand for 10 minutes before slicing. Yield: 12 servings