

Top 10 Most Tender Muscles in the Beef Carcass

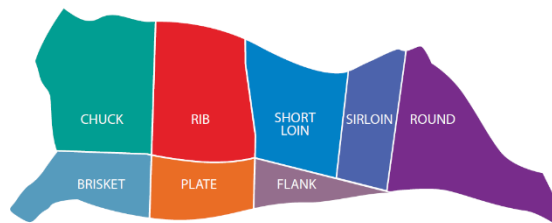
When many think of tender beef cuts, the most commonly discussed are cuts like the Tenderloin or the Ribeye Steak. Generally, it has been thought that the cuts from the Rib and Loin primals are the highest quality and offer the best eating experience of all cuts in the beef carcass. Unfortunately, they are also among the most expensive cuts. In the late 1990s a checkoff-funded research project called Muscle Profiling was conducted to see if any other beef cuts had the opportunity to offer a good eating experience for consumers. This project had two goals, to find cuts of beef that could be substitutes for higher priced steaks while adding value to the underutilized portions of the carcass, and to find cuts of beef that could provide a great eating experience for consumers at a lower cost.

This research project found many tender cuts of beef, and the majority of the top 10 most tender muscles came from areas not historically thought of as tender, such as the Chuck and Round.

Some of the most recognized of these muscles make cuts like the Flat Iron Steak and the Shoulder Petite Tender, but many other cuts were identified as “opportunity cuts” that can offer increased carcass value back to beef producers and a great eating experience for consumers.

While many of the top 10 most tender muscles do not make full retail cuts, some are components of steaks and roasts that are common beef cuts. For instance, the *Multifidus dorsi* and *Complexus* are found in Ribeye Steaks, and although they are not large enough to be merchandised as steaks on their own, they contribute to the great eating experience that Ribeye Steaks are known for.

The fact sheet, “Ranking of Beef Muscles for Tenderness,” is a great resource for more information on the Muscle Profiling research and results.



Ranking	Latin Muscle Name	Primal	Cut Name
1	Psoas major	Loin	Tenderloin
2	Infraspinatus	Chuck	Flat Iron
3	Spinalis Dorsi	Chuck, Rib	Ribeye Cap
4	Multifidus dorsi	Chuck, Rib, and Loin	
5	Subscapularis	Chuck	
6	Teres major	Chuck	Shoulder Petite Tender
7	Rectus femoris	Round	Sirloin Tip Center
8	Tensor fasciae latae	Loin	Tri-Tip
9	Biceps brachii	Chuck	
10	Complexus	Chuck, Rib	