

THE MOST UNDERRATED CUT OF BEEF

Full of flavor and juice, prime rib deserves another look.

HERE'S A QUESTION EVERY MEAT-loving man should ask himself: Do I know what prime rib is? We're not talking about the trend-spotter answer, which is that it's the old-fashioned slab of beef that's now showing up everywhere from high-end meat shops like Lobel's, in New York, to hip restaurants, like San Francisco's Universal Cafe. Even the steakhouse trend toward monster cuts for two or three is a move back to prime rib. The real answer is that prime rib is the ne plus ultra of hardcore beef cookery. To be precise, butchers cut cows into nine parts that later get sliced into retail cuts. The prime rib is the big part of the rib cage (cut away the ribs, trim off the fat, and you've got rib-eyes). Roasting prime rib whole makes use of that "fat cap," forcing moisture inward; ditto for the bones, which lend flavor and protect the meat from the oven's drying effect. "There's such moisture during cooking that the flavor is amazing," says Robert Moore, executive chef at Prime Steakhouse in Las Vegas. But the proper venue for standing rib roast is your home: This staggering hunk of heat-seared animal is perfect for a bunch of friends, a few bottles of red wine, and a very long night. —DANIEL DUANE