

The Digest thirteen things

...Your **Butcher** Won't Tell You

Don't be fooled by supermarket brand names like Butcher's Brand, Rancher's Reserve, and Blue Ribbon. The label to look for is *USDA Quality Grade*. Prime is the best (and most expensive), followed by choice, select, then standard.

A big part of our job is window dressing. We flip brown meat over, cut off fat, and dab away blood that might turn you off.

Your beef may get ground in Iowa, **stuffed in a long tube of plastic**, and trucked to our store, where we regrind and package it.

Some companies **pump carbon monoxide** into packaging to keep the meat from turning brown.

Make sure you check the price per pound or per serving. **The regular size is often cheaper** than the family pack.

Why are you so wedded to the cut of beef your recipe calls for? We can suggest cheaper options.

My favorite cut? The hanging tender. Also known as a hanger steak

or a bistro steak, **it's got great flavor at a good price.**

Take the meat tray at the bottom of the stack or the farthest in back. **Just like milk, it tends to be fresher.**

Save \$1.50 to \$2 a pound on boneless pork chops. Buy a whole boneless pork loin roast and slice it into chops an inch thick.

Yes, that 92/8 ground beef is lean, but if you make burgers with it, you might be disappointed. **Your favorite burger joint probably uses beef that's much fattier.**

Even if those chicken breasts say "100 percent natural," they may still be injected with sodium-

laden broth, salt water, or seaweed extract. **Always check the label.**


Some of the best tasting cuts are the ugliest ones, like the flap meat on the belly part of beef.

Ask me to help. Even if it's already on a tray wrapped in cellophane, **I can cut the fat off a roast**, trim a flank steak into stir-fry strips, or grind up a chuck roast. Then I'll neatly wrap it back up for you. All for no extra charge.

Sources: Butchers in New York City; Charlotte, North Carolina; San Francisco; Kingston, New York; and Timberville, Virginia; Lee O'Hara, author of *Beef Secrets Straight from the Butcher*; and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

Interviews by
Michelle Crouch



 More things your butcher won't tell you are at readersdigest.com/butcher.