

Meat glossary

A

ABO | Aitch Bone Out

A lamb hind leg with the aitch bone and knuckle tip removed leaving the leg, shank and femur bone remaining.

AHDB

Stands for the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, which is a levy-funded organization in the United Kingdom. The AHDB operates as a non-departmental public body (NDPB) and is primarily focused on supporting the agricultural and horticultural industries. Its key objectives include enhancing the productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability of these sectors.

AIMS

The Association of Independent Meat Suppliers (AIMS) is the voice for the meat industry in the United Kingdom in the 21st century. Operating with a unique and highly skilled team of industry professionals we maintain a regular dialogue with government and other organisations representing the interests of all stages of meat processing.

Abattoir

An abattoir, also commonly known as a slaughterhouse, is a facility where animals are slaughtered and processed for the production of meat and other products. These establishments play a crucial role in the food supply chain, providing meat for human consumption.

Achilles tendon

The tendon that is found in the hind limb of the beef animal that is used to suspend the beef carcass from the rail.

Ageing

The process of holding raw meat for a period of time before processing for the purpose of tenderising and condensing flavour. Dry aging is performed by storing the meat exposed to air under refrigeration. Evaporation of moisture from the muscles serves to concentrate the flavour and cause significant weight loss. Natural enzymes break down connective tissue to improve tenderness. Wet aging is performed by anaerobically packaging the meat and storing under refrigeration. Wet aging increases the tenderness of the meat, and moisture (weight) loss is minimised.

Aitchbone

The portion of the pelvis that is exposed when a carcass is divided at the medial line.

Angus

Angus cattle comprises two breeds of cattle from the original Scottish Aberdeen stock, Black Angus and Red Angus (the original name of the breed was Aberdeen Angus). Black is the predominant colour.

The Aberdeen Angus, sometimes simply Angus, is a Scottish breed of small beef cattle. It derives from cattle native to the counties of Aberdeen, Banff, Kincardine and Angus in north-eastern Scotland. In 2018 the breed accounted for over 17% of the UK beef industry.

Ardennes ham

An air-dried ham, similar to prosciutto, produced in the Ardennes region of Belgium. The hams are hand-rubbed with a mixture of salt, juniper berries, thyme, and coriander or brined, smoked over beech wood until dark brown, and aged. Finished hams typically possess a full-bodied flavor and soft texture. IGP-certified hams are marked with a yellow-numbered lead seal as a guarantee of quality and origin. The Belgium-French name is jambon d'Ardenne.

B

BMPA

The British Meat Processors Association represents the majority of companies across the British meat industry. Members are responsible for supplying fresh meat and meat products to retailers, restaurants and food service companies throughout the UK.

The Association works with Government and other organisations to support a competitive, professional and sustainable meat industry, ensuring a reliable and affordable food supply for British customers.

BRC

British Retail Consortium. A trade association certification that upholds specific standards within the industry.

Baby back ribs

The portion of the rib-cage structure that lies directly ventral to the loin on either lateral side of the spine. A full set contains 13 rib pieces along with the intercostal muscles. Unless otherwise specified, these ribs are from a pig.

Backfat

Backfat refers to the layer of fat located on the back of an animal, typically between the skin and the muscles. The amount and thickness of backfat can vary between different animal species and breeds. Backfat is often an important consideration in the evaluation of meat quality, especially in the pork and beef industries.

Baron

A very large roasting cut, usually of beef, designed to serve a large number of people. The cut is usually produced from a carcass that has not been split into left and right sides. A baron of loins is the most common.

Sadly no longer possible to buy in UK as regulations require the removal of the spinal chord.

Beef

The term “beef” has its origins in Old French and Middle English. It comes from the Old French word “boef,” which means “ox” or “cow.” The Old French term, in turn, is derived from the Latin word “bos” or “bovem,” meaning “ox” or “cow.”

During the medieval period, especially after the Norman Conquest of 1066, the English language underwent significant changes, and various words from Old French were adopted. This linguistic influence is evident in the use of the word “beef” to refer to the meat of cattle. It reflects the Norman nobility’s use of French, while the English-speaking commoners, who raised and worked with the animals, continued to use Old English terms like “ox” or “cow” for the live animals.

Beef jerky

Jerky is one of the oldest ways of preserving food; the meat was cut into strips, smoked, and dried in the sun. Today it’s smoked and dried in smokers.

Jerky is ready-to-eat, needs no additional preparation and can be stored for months without refrigeration.

Bile

A brown to greenish yellow fluid secreted by the liver and stored in the gall bladder. Bile aids in the emulsification and absorption of fats in the digestive process. Bile is used by the pharmaceutical industry for steroid production and for digestive aids.

Blast freezing

The most commonly used commercial method for freezing meat products. Air is cooled to between -10C to -40C, then by blowers increased to an air velocity of 760 mph which causes the product to be frozen at a rapid rate. The meat products must be wrapped to protect from freezer burn.

Blood splashing

The appearance of minute haemorrhages in the muscle, fat and connective tissue due to a transient rise in blood pressure at the time of slaughter. Particularly evident in pork that has been cured.

Bloom

Development of the bright colour associated with the formation of oxymyoglobin on the lean surface of a cut of meat when exposed to oxygen. In beef this takes approximately 20 minutes. The colour goes from a purplish red to a bright cherry red.

Bobby calf

A “bobby calf” is a term used to refer to a very young calf, usually a male, that is still at an age where it is dependent on milk. The term “bobby calf” is often applied specifically to male calves that are surplus to dairy farming operations, as they are not needed for milk production and may be destined for the veal industry.



Bone taint

“Bone taint” refers to an undesirable off-flavour that can be present in meat, particularly pork, as a result of certain conditions or practices during production. It is a term often associated with the presence of boar taint, a specific type of off-putting odour and flavour found in the meat of uncastrated male pigs (boars).

Boar taint is primarily caused by the accumulation of two compounds: androsterone and skatole. These compounds are produced in the testes and the intestines of male pigs, respectively. Boar taint is typically not an issue in meat from female pigs or castrated males, as these compounds are present in much lower concentrations.

Boston cut

The term “Boston cut” can refer to two different types of meat cuts, depending on whether it’s pork or beef:

Boston Butt: This is a cut of pork that comes from the upper part of the shoulder from the front leg. It’s best known as the cut used to make pulled pork, a staple of barbecues in the southern United States. In the UK, a Boston butt starts life as a neck-end; half of the pig’s shoulder. The other half is often called a hand and spring.

Boston Beef Roast: This is a cut of beef that comes from the shoulder of the cow. It’s also known as a Cross Rib Roast or English Roast. This cut of meat is located lower down the shoulder, where it connects with the rib portion of the animal.

Both cuts are popular for their flavour and tenderness when cooked slowly.

Bovine

“Bovine” is a term that refers to cattle or members of the Bovidae family, which includes domesticated cattle (*Bos taurus*), wild cattle, and certain related species. Bovines are characterized by their cloven hooves and four-chambered stomachs, which enable them to efficiently digest fibrous plant materials.

Bowl chopper

A piece of equipment used in sausage making that consists a round bowl in which meat is placed that rotates so the meat is passed through a series of blades rotating at about 5000 rpm and is chopped into fine particles.

Braise

“Braising” is a cooking method that involves slow-cooking food in a covered pot with a small amount of liquid. It is a versatile technique commonly used for tougher cuts of meat, such as beef brisket, short ribs, or lamb shanks, as well as vegetables. Braising helps tenderise tough cuts and infuses them with rich flavours.

Bratwurst

A sausage of German origin usually composed of veal, pork, and or beef. In different parts of the world, this sausage made be sold either cooked or raw. In its various forms, the meat filling may either be emulsified, finely ground, or coarsely ground. The name is derived from the German words brät, finely chopped meat, and wurst, sausage.

Brisket

The brisket is a cut of beef that comes from the lower chest or breast area of the animal. This cut is known for its rich flavor but can be relatively tough, so it benefits from slow cooking methods that help break down the connective tissues, resulting in tender meat.

Key characteristics of brisket include a good amount of marbling (intramuscular fat) and connective tissue, which contributes to the flavour and texture. Brisket is often used for smoking, braising, or slow roasting to enhance its tenderness and develop its distinctive taste.

Broiler

A young chicken (usually 6–8 weeks of age), either sex that has tender-meat with soft, pliable, smooth-textured skin and flexible breast-bone cartilage.

Bullock

A intact male beef animal that is less mature than a bull. Skeletal maturity distinguishes the difference between the two. Bullock carcasses have slight red and slightly soft chine bones, and the cartilage on the ends of the thoracic vertebrae have some evidence of ossification; the sacral vertebrae are completely fused; the cartilage on the ends of the lumbar vertebrae are nearly completely ossified; and the rib bones are slightly wide and slightly flat.

Bushmeat

Meat obtained by hunting wild animals especially in Africa and Asia

Butterfly

To split steaks, chops, cutlets and roasts in half leaving halves hinged on one side.

C

CKT | Chump Knuckle Tip

A lamb hind leg with the chump and knuckle tip are removed, with shank, aitch bone, and femur bone remaining, and can also be referred to as a short cut lamb leg.

Capon

A capon is a male chicken that is castrated before reaching maturity. This reduces testosterone levels, allowing more fat to develop within the muscle for a particularly tender and flavourful meat.

Capon production is no longer legal in the UK, but it remains a popular Christmas roast in Italy.

Captive bolt

A captive bolt pistol, also known as a captive bolt gun or stunner, is a device used to stun animals before slaughter.

It works by delivering a forceful blow to the animal's forehead to induce unconsciousness. Captive bolt guns can be either penetrating or non-penetrating, with penetrating versions causing damage to brain tissue.

The bolt is propelled by compressed air, a spring mechanism or a blank cartridge. After striking the animal, it retracts back into the barrel.

Carcase weight

"Carcase weight," also spelled "carcass weight," refers to the weight of an animal's body after it has been slaughtered, dressed, and processed in an abattoir or slaughterhouse. The term specifically applies to the weight of the carcass without certain non-edible parts, such as the head, hide, feet, and internal organs. Carcass weight is a crucial metric in the meat industry as it provides a standardized measure for evaluating the amount of meat produced from an animal.

The weight of the carcass is an essential factor for both producers and consumers, as it influences the yield of meat that can be obtained from the animal. When discussing meat production and trade, the carcass weight is often used as a basis for pricing and comparison.

Chateaubriand

In French butchery in the early 20th century, the beef tenderloin was divided into five portions of approximately equal length. The second piece from the rump end, the one where the iliacus and the psoas major join, was the chateaubriand.

In the mid-20th century in America, this piece was used as a roast cut for two people in fine restaurants. There is also a 19th-century French steak dish by the same name that uses the same cut.

Chitterlings

Chitterlings, pronounced "chit-lins," are a type of food made from the small intestines of pigs, particularly the lower part of the intestines. They are a traditional dish in various cultures, and their preparation often involves a thorough cleaning and then cooking. Chitterlings have a distinct taste and texture and are enjoyed by those who appreciate their unique flavour.

Chorizo

A highly-seasoned, spicy sausage whose red colour comes from spices made from red-coloured peppers. Spanish varieties are cured, dried, and ready to eat, similar to other dried, cured sausages. Mexican varieties are fresh and require cooking before eating.

Chuck

"Chuck" refers to a specific cut of beef that comes from the shoulder and neck region of the animal. This cut is known for its rich flavour but can be relatively tough, containing a good amount of connective tissue. It is a versatile cut that can be used for various cooking methods, including braising, stewing, roasting, or ground beef.



Clod

This is an economical cut that is flavourful but a less tender meat. It is cut from the middle of the shoulder and usually sold as stewing steak or used in burgers. Suitable for slow cooking in stews.

CO₂ stunning

A method used in the slaughter of animals, particularly poultry, to render them unconscious and insensible to pain before processing. The method involves exposing the animals to a controlled atmosphere containing high concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO₂), which induces unconsciousness and serves as a humane way to facilitate the subsequent steps of slaughter.

Cod fat

Cod fat is a lump of fat which can be sliced to cover roasting joints to keep them moist and stop them from drying out during the cooking process. It is taken from the scrotum or crotch area of beef cattle, and hence probably why cod piece was so named.

Collagen casing

Collagen casings are mainly produced from the collagen in beef or pig hides and the bones and tendons. It can also be derived from poultry and fish. They have been made for more than 50 years and their share of the market has been increasing. Usually the cost to produce sausages in collagen is significantly lower than making sausages in gut because of higher production speeds and lower labor requirements.

The collagen for artificial casings is processed extensively. It is formed by extrusion through a die to the desired diameter, dried and shirred into short sticks up to 41 cm (16 in) long that contain as much as 50 m (160 ft) of casing. In a newer process, a form of dough is coextruded with the meat blend, and a coating is formed by treating the outside with a calcium solution to set the coating.

Conformation

Conformation refers to the balanced growth of carcass sections or wholesale cuts and the muscle-to-bone ratio, ensuring proper proportions.

Corned beef

Corning refers to pickling beef in a seasoned brine or curing beef in salt. The term “corn” comes from the Old English word used to describe any small hard particles. Today, briskets or eye of rounds are used to make corned beef, originally all cuts were used when corned beef was used for both land- and sea-based military units.

Crackling

‘Crackling’ refers to the crispy, crunchy skin of roasted or cooked meat, most commonly pork.

Pork crackling is made by cooking pork with the skin on, allowing the fat beneath the skin to render and the skin to become crisp. For the best results, the skin should be dry before cooking and exposed to a high temperature.

While most commonly associated with pork, similar crispy skin can also be achieved with poultry such as chicken and duck.

Cube roll

A prime cut of beef steak meat also known as a ribeye.

Cull

‘Cull’ refers to the removal or selection of animals from a group based on specific criteria. In agriculture and animal husbandry, animals may be culled to improve the health, quality or productivity of a population, or for reasons such as disease control.

Curing

Meat curing is a method of preserving and flavouring meat using salt, seasonings and preservatives. It helps extend shelf life by removing moisture, which limits microbial growth and prevents spoilage, while giving the meat a distinctive savoury flavour.

D

DDP | Delivered Duty Paid

A delivery agreement whereby the seller assumes all of the responsibility of the transporting of the goods until they reach the destination. This includes all transport costs and export clearance and customs documentation.

Dark cutter

Beef with lean tissue that is dark in color. It is the result of stress that has reduced the glycogen content in muscle prior to slaughter. The muscle pH of a dark cutter is generally high which results in higher water-holding capacity and more light absorbency than normal thus causing a dark lean colour.

Daubes

A cheaper cut of meat used in stew for braising. Usually inner cheek meat.

Dehairing machine

The dehairing machine is equipped with rotating rubber paddles that effectively remove hair from a scalded pig carcass.

Double-muscling cattle

A genetic condition in certain cattle breeds that results in an increase in muscle mass and a distinctively muscular appearance. This condition is characterized by the development of abnormally large and well-defined muscles in the animals, particularly in the hindquarters and shoulders. Double muscling is primarily associated with the presence of a mutation in the myostatin gene.

Dressing percent

‘Dressing percentage’ refers to the proportion of an animal’s live weight that remains as carcass weight after slaughter and dressing. It is expressed as a percentage and is used to assess production efficiency and estimate carcass yield.

Dressing Percentage = (Carcass Weight ÷ Live Weight) × 100

The percentage can vary depending on factors such as species, breed, age and the animal’s level of finish. It is an important measure for producers and processors when assessing how efficiently live weight is converted into carcass weight.

Dry cure

‘Dry curing’ is a method of preserving meat by rubbing it with a mixture of salt, sugar, sodium nitrite, erythorbate and spices.



Unlike wet curing, the meat is packed in a dry salt mixture rather than immersed in or injected with brine. Additional herbs and spices can be added for flavour and the meat may be smoked after curing.

E

Entrecôte

A premium cut of beef used for steaks and roasts. Usually a variation of a ribeye but sometimes the fingerbones are left in.

Edible by-products

Portions of the animal other than the carcass that are suitable for human consumption.

include hearts, livers, tails, tongues, lips, kidneys, tripe (stomach), brains, sweetbreads (the thymus pancreas gland, melt (spleen), fries (testicles), head meat, fats and other trimmings, chitterlings and natural casings (intestines), blood and certain bones.

Evisceration

Evisceration is the extraction of the internal organs from an animal during the process of slaughter.

Eye muscle

The term 'eye muscle' is often used in the context of meat production, particularly in relation to evaluating the quality and yield of meat from livestock. The eye muscle, more formally known as the longissimus dorsi muscle, is a major muscle located along the spine of the animal, running parallel to the vertebral column. This muscle is commonly referred to as the loin or backstrap.

F

FBO | Femur Bone Only

A lamb hind leg with the shank, aitch bone, chump and tail are removed, leaving just the femur bone remaining.

Fatstock

'Fatstock' is a term traditionally used in the livestock industry to refer to animals, particularly cattle, that are raised for meat production and have reached a marketable weight or condition. The term is often associated with animals that are ready for slaughter and processing to produce meat products.

Finished

Once Livestock reach market specifications and are ready for processing, they are described as 'finished'.

Forequarter

The term 'forequarter' refers to the front section of an animal's carcass, specifically the front half of the body, including the front legs and corresponding meat cuts. In the context of beef or veal, the forequarter typically includes cuts such as the chuck, brisket, shank, and rib.

Foreshank

The shank portion of a front leg, including the end of the humerus along with the radius and ulna bones with their associated muscles and connective tissues.

Freezer burn

Freezer burn is a condition that occurs when frozen food is exposed to air, leading to dehydration and the oxidation of the food's surface. It's characterised by the development of dry, discoloured, and sometimes tough patches on the surface of the frozen item. Freezer burn can affect the quality and taste of the affected food.

While freezer burn doesn't make food unsafe to eat, it can negatively impact its taste and texture. Trimming away freezer-burned portions before cooking can help improve the overall quality of the food. Proper storage and packaging techniques are essential to reduce the likelihood of freezer burn in frozen foods.

French trim

A sophisticated and elegant presentation where the meat is removed from the bottom portion of the bone.

With lamb, pork and beef, it is usually the loin of the animal that is used, and the rib bones that are trimmed.

G

Gambrel

A metal bar placed between the hind legs of a hog carcass to separate the legs and suspend the carcass.

Gelatin

A translucent, collarless, brittle, flavourless, irreversibly hydrolysed form of collagen. It is commonly used as a gelling agent in food. Common sources for production include porcine skin, bovine hides, and animal bones. In the kitchen, gelatin is a common by-product from the production of charcuterie and stocks.

Giblets

'Giblets' refer to the edible internal organs of poultry, typically chickens and turkeys. These organs are often included with the whole bird when purchased and can be used in various culinary preparations.

Giblets include the heart, liver, gizzard and neck.

Gilt

A 'gilt' is a term used in the context of swine farming to refer to a female pig that has not yet given birth to piglets and is typically under a year old. Essentially, a gilt is a young, sexually mature female pig that has not yet had her first litter of piglets. Once a gilt has given birth, she is referred to as a 'sow'.

Gizzard

Organ found in the digestive tract of birds, filled with stone or grit used for grinding up food.

H

HACCP | Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point

A systematic approach to identification of potential food safety hazards, assessing the risk and setting up controls and procedures to prevent problems.

Haggis

Scotland's national dish is haggis (sheep's stomach stuffed with the animal's minced heart, liver, and lungs).



Halal meat

Meat that is prepared and processed in accordance with Islamic dietary laws, as outlined in the Quran. The term 'Halal' means permissible or lawful in Arabic and it encompasses various aspects of daily life, including food consumption. The guidelines for halal meat production are derived from Islamic teachings.

Halal slaughter involves specific guidelines for the ritualistic preparation of meat, making it permissible for consumption by Muslims.

Haunch

Lamb, venison or pork chump on leg.

Heifer

A heifer is a young female cow that has not yet given birth to a calf. The term “heifer” specifically refers to a female bovine that is typically between the ages of one and two years old and has not yet reached maturity for reproduction. Once a heifer gives birth to her first calf, she is generally referred to as a “cow.”

Hide

The whole skin or pelt from one of the larger animals. Pelts from smaller or younger animals are usually referred to as skins.

Hide

The whole skin or pelt from one of the larger animals. Pelts from smaller or younger animals are usually referred to as skins.

Hide puller

A device used to remove the hide by attaching a chain to the hide and pulling it either up or down away from the carcass.

Hindquarter

The rear half of a beef carcass side composed of the loin, flank, and round. Usually separated from the forequarter by a cut between the 12th and 13th ribs (The last two ribs)

Hogget

Hogget is sheep meat between 1-2 years old. This tends to be produced from the slow growing hill breeds as they often do not fatten in time to be classed as lamb. Hogget is delicious and benefits from the tenderness of a relatively young animal along with some of the richer flavour of older sheep meat.

Honeycomb tripe

The lining of the second compartment (reticulum) of the ruminant stomach which has honeycomb.



IMTA

A UK trade association, representing predominantly UK companies importing and exporting meat. Our goal is the facilitation of the trade in meat ensuring UK consumer choice, food security and carcass balance through import and export. IMTA provides leading trade expertise on UK trade policy including on customs, tariffs, quotas, rules of origin, WTO, trade agreements, SPS conditions and market access.

Iberico pig

A very old strain of black-skinned pigs with very little hair. The adult has slender legs and a very long snout. Iberico pigs also have a high fat content. The large amount of fat covering each ham, enables the meat to be cured for a much longer period, resulting in a much more complex, intense flavour.

Inspection stamp

Proof of inspection that the harvested animal is fit for human consumption.

J

Jewish fillet

This is a lean tender cut of beef from the shoulder used for braising, also known as the bullet muscle. not to be confused with beef fillet from the hind quarter that is a pan frying or grilling cut.

Jowl

A wholesale cut of the pork carcass which includes the cheek muscle and fat skin surrounding it.

The jowl is a cut of meat that comes from the cheeks and jaw of an animal, typically a pig. It is a fatty and flavoursome cut that is often used in various culinary traditions for its rich taste and unique texture.

K

Kidney knob

The rounded structure of the kidney and the surrounding fat.

Kobe beef

‘Kobe beef’ is a highly prized type of Wagyu beef from cattle raised in Hyogo Prefecture, Japan, known for its exceptional marbling, tenderness and flavour.

It comes from Japanese Black cattle and is produced to strict standards within Hyogo Prefecture. Authentic Kobe beef is highly exclusive and, due to Japanese export restrictions, has historically been difficult to source outside Japan.

Kofta

A Middle Eastern and South Asian meatball or meatloaf. They consist of balls of minced or ground meat, usually beef or lamb, mixed with spices and or onions. They are often shaped into meatballs which are prepared with a mixture of ground meat, rice, leeks and some other ingredients.

Kosher slaughter

Also known as ‘shechita’ is a method of ritual slaughter in accordance with Jewish dietary laws (kashrut). The process is governed by specific religious rules and regulations outlined in traditional Jewish texts, including the Torah and Talmud. Kosher slaughter is designed to ensure the humane and kosher preparation of meat for consumption by Jewish communities.

L

Lamb

Lamb is classed as young sheep meat under 1 year old; the animals are still classed as lamb until they have grown their first incisors. This meat is delicate in flavour and tender in texture.



Lairage

"Lairage" refers to the holding area where livestock are kept immediately before slaughter. It allows animals to rest, recover from the stress of transportation and acclimatise to their surroundings.

Proper lairage management is important for animal welfare and can also help maintain meat quality.

Lamb shank

Lamb shank, a cut from the shin of the lamb, is one of the most flavoursome cuts of lamb. The connective tissue, which gives lamb shank its flavour, also leads to toughness if not prepared correctly.

Lamb shank needs to be cooked over low heat for a long time to become velvety, flavoursome and fall-off-the-bone juicy.

Lard

Pork fat that has been rendered, or heated, to remove impurities. When properly rendered, it can be almost odourless and tasteless.

Rendered beef or sheep fat is known as tallow.

M

MAP | Modified Atmosphere Packaging

MAP or gas flushing is a proven and natural method of extending the shelf life and quality of food products. It uses a specific single gas or a mixture of gases to create a protective atmosphere around the food. This protective atmosphere, combined with appropriate packaging material and, in many cases, lowered temperatures, preserves the taste, safety and appearance of the food for longer.

Medallions

Medallions are when the eye of the loin is trimmed totally of all fat and silver skin to leave just a perfectly lean cut of meat.

Melts

Industry terminology for spleens. The large organ in the upper left abdomen lying near or across the surface of the stomach. Modifies and regulates the cellular components of blood.

Metmyoglobin

Oxidised form of the protein myoglobin, which is found in meat and contributes to its colour. Responsible for the browning of meat after cutting. Also occurs in a different form in the hip muscles of beef, where rainbow-like colours appear from the reflection of light.

Mutton

The meat of a mature sheep is called mutton, and it's basically the same as lamb, though it can be slightly tougher with a more pungent flavor, but still appetising.

This lamb is a particularly good meat type for long and slow cooking and can stand up to strong spices. Mutton is still served frequently in the UK, Ireland and India.



Myoglobin

One of two proteins producing the colour or pigment of the muscles. Myoglobin quantity varies with species, age, sex, muscle, and physical activity of muscle.

N

NPA | The National Pig Association

The representative trade association for the British pig industry. It is allied to the National Farmers' Union (NFU) and represents the pig interests of NFU members. The NPA is based in Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, and its members represent around 70% of the British pig industry.

The association works closely with the industry's monthly trade journal, Pig World, and is involved in various activities to support British commercial pig producers. The NPA also organizes events and provides information and support to its members.

Natural casing

Natural sausage casings come from the intestines of animals such as pigs, sheep and cattle.

Neck End of Lamb

Middle neck is a portion of the animal behind the scrag end that reaches about a third of the way down the back of the animal. Both the scrag end and the middle neck contain lots of bones from the spine and a high proportion of connective tissue and fat. Although they can be cooked with the bone in, it is possible to take the bone out and roll the remaining meat into a joint for oven roasting.

Newcastle Disease

"Newcastle disease" (ND) is a highly contagious viral disease affecting birds, including domestic poultry. It can cause respiratory problems, depression, diarrhoea and nervous symptoms, with severity ranging from mild to highly virulent forms.

The disease spreads mainly through contact with infected birds, faeces, respiratory secretions or contaminated equipment, food and water. Highly pathogenic Newcastle disease is notifiable under international animal health regulations.

ND primarily affects birds but is a minor zoonotic disease that can cause mild, self-limiting conjunctivitis in humans.

O

OTM | Over Thirty Months

The 'Over Thirty Months Rule' was a control introduced to prevent cattle aged over 30 months from entering the food chain due to concerns about BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy).

The rule remained in place until November 2005. An additional control also prohibited the mechanical recovery of meat from cattle bones.

Offal

Offal refers to the internal organs and entrails of butchered animals, especially those organs that are considered edible. Offal is a term commonly used in the context of meat processing and consumption, and it includes a variety of organ meats that may have distinct flavours and textures. The consumption of offal has cultural and culinary significance in various cuisines around the world.

Examples include liver, kidneys, heart, tripe, sweetbreads, brains, tongue and oxtail.

Organic meat

Organic meat refers to meat produced from animals raised under organic farming practices, which adhere to specific standards and regulations designed to promote environmentally friendly and humane agricultural practices. Organic meat production encompasses various factors, including animal welfare, feed quality and the use of synthetic inputs.

Ossobuco

Traditional Italian dish, particularly associated with Milan, made from cross-cut veal shanks. The shank is braised slowly with vegetables, white wine and stock, resulting in tender meat and a rich flavour.

The name translates to 'bone with a hole', referring to the marrow-filled bone at the centre of the cut. It is traditionally served with gremolata and often accompanied by risotto alla milanese or polenta.

Ovine

"Ovine" is a term used to refer to anything related to sheep. It is an adjective that describes the characteristics, behaviours, or products associated with sheep.

Products derived from sheep may also be described as ovine. For example, ovine wool refers to wool obtained from sheep.

P

PAD | Pret A Decoupe

The meat has been de-fatted and is ready to slice or dice.

Paddywack

The common name for the nuchal ligament of cattle and sheep. The nuchal ligament is a thick, elastic band of tissue that connects the back of the head to the neck.

Pancreas

The pancreas is a gland located near the duodenum that produces insulin, a hormone that helps regulate blood glucose, as well as digestive enzymes that break down fats, carbohydrates and proteins.

In pigs, the pancreas is sometimes referred to as 'false sweetbreads' and can be used by the pharmaceutical industry for insulin production.

Patella

The patella, commonly known as the kneecap, is a small, flat, and rounded triangular bone located at the front of the knee joint.

Pastrami

'Pastrami' is a cured and highly seasoned meat product, most commonly made from beef, although pork, mutton and turkey can also be used.

The meat is typically brined, seasoned and smoked, resulting in a tender, flavourful product that is often thinly sliced for sandwiches and other dishes.

Picanha

Picanha beef is cut from the rump cap and is the most prized cut of meat in Brazil and incredibly popular across both Latin America and Portugal.

Picanha makes a fantastic BBQ cut or roasting joint. A decent amount of fat coverage to keep it moist, whilst packing plenty of flavour.

Pluck

'Pluck' refers to the edible internal organs of an animal, particularly the heart, liver and lungs. The term is commonly used in the meat industry and is often associated with sheep, poultry and game birds.

Pluck can be used in products such as sausages, pâtés and traditional dishes, including haggis.

Pork

The word 'pork' comes from the Old French 'porc', meaning pig or swine, which originates from the Latin 'porcus'. The term was introduced into English following the Norman Conquest of 1066, when French became influential in medieval England.

Primals

Basic major cuts that result from cutting carcasses and sides into smaller portions.

Prime cattle

'Prime cattle' refers to high-quality, well-finished cattle raised primarily for beef production. The term is used to describe cattle with characteristics that are likely to produce high-quality beef, such as good conformation, muscling and fat cover.

The exact criteria for classifying cattle as 'prime' vary between countries and grading systems.

Pulled pork

'Pulled pork' refers to pork that has been slow-cooked until tender and then shredded or 'pulled' into smaller pieces. It is typically made using cuts such as pork shoulder, where slow cooking helps break down the connective tissue and creates tender, flavourful meat.

Pulled pork is commonly seasoned with a dry rub or marinade and served in sandwiches, wraps, tacos or alongside barbecue sauce and coleslaw.

pH

Potential Hydrogen; the acidity or alkalinity of a solution. A scale is used to measure the level of pH in meat carcasses [0 = acidic or dry – 7 is neutral – 14 = alkaline or moist). A living unstressed animal would indicate a 6.5 pH prior to death.



QSM | Quality Standard Mark

The Quality Standard Mark (QSM) was an assurance scheme funded by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB). Launched in 2004, it set requirements designed to support meat quality, including age specifications for cattle and sheep and minimum maturation times.

The QSM scheme for the beef and lamb sectors was wound down by AHDB in March 2022.



RTA | Red Tractor Assured

Assured Food Standards is a United Kingdom company which licenses the Red Tractor quality mark.

Red Tractor is the UK's largest food and farm standards scheme, covering all areas of food production from animal welfare and food safety to traceability and environmental protection.



SAMW | Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers

The Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers represents red meat industry views and the interests of its member companies, working closely with partner organisations, Government Ministers and officials in Edinburgh and London to promote the efficient operation of Scotland's meat sector and lobby for necessary improvements.

SQQ | Standard Quality Quotation

The Standard Quality Quotation (SQQ) is an average price for all lambs sold at market in Britain, marketed within predefined weight bands of 25.5kg and 45.5kg. For many years the range has been used as an indicator of market requirements.

Salami

'Salami' is a cured sausage made from fermented and air-dried meat, traditionally using pork, although other meats can also be used. The curing and drying process gives salami its distinctive flavour and helps preserve the meat, allowing it to be stored for longer than fresh meat.



Sausage

A sausage is a type of meat product usually made from ground meat, often pork, beef or poultry, along with salt, spices and other flavourings. Other ingredients such as grains or breadcrumbs may be included as fillers or extenders.

Serrano ham

'Serrano ham', or jamón serrano, is a traditional Spanish dry-cured ham made from the hind legs of white pigs. The ham is cured and aged to develop its distinctive flavour, aroma and firm texture.

Short Ribs

Short ribs refer to a flavoursome and rich cut of beef that comes from the lower ribcage of the cow. These ribs are known for their meaty and well-marbled characteristics, making them a popular choice for braising and slow-cooking methods to achieve tenderness and enhance their savoury flavour.

Silverskin

A tough connective tissue surrounding muscle; the pearly membrane found on certain cuts of meat that is removed before cooking to prevent curling.

Sirloin

'Sirloin' refers to a prime section of beef taken from the loin. It is commonly sold boned and rolled for roasting, making it a popular choice for a traditional Sunday roast.

Sirloin steaks are cut from the same section and are suitable for grilling, frying, stir-frying and barbecuing. The name is believed to come from the Old French 'surlonge', meaning 'above the loin', rather than the popular story that a king knighted the cut 'Sir Loin'.

Smoked

Preserved or flavoured by applying smoke to meats, usually after curing. Cold smoking is done at lower temperatures so as not to cook the protein in the meat; hot smoking is done at higher temperatures to cook the protein and smoke it at the same time.

Sow

A 'sow' is a mature female pig that has given birth to one or more litters of piglets. Sows are an important part of breeding herds and are responsible for producing and raising piglets.

A young female pig that has not yet given birth is known as a gilt.

Spatchcock

'Spatchcock' refers to a method of preparing poultry, typically chicken, where the backbone is removed so that the bird can be flattened out. This technique allows for more even cooking and quicker preparation, making it well-suited for grilling, roasting, or other high-heat cooking methods.

SRMs | Specified Risk Materials

Parts removed from beef animals over 30 months old to lessen the risk of BSE. Some of the parts removed are the head, brain, part of the intestines, and most of the backbone.

Spleen

The spleen is an organ found in vertebrates, including humans and animals, and it plays various roles in the immune system and blood filtration. In animals raised for meat production, the spleen is considered an organ meat and is consumed in certain cuisines.

Another meat trade term for spleens are 'Melts'

Stirk

A 'stirk' is an old English term for a young bullock or heifer, generally between one and two years old. The term is traditionally used in British and Irish farming to describe cattle that are older than calves but have not yet reached maturity. The exact age range can vary depending on regional usage.

Stockinette

'Stockinette' is a tubular fabric or netting, usually made from cotton or similar materials, used in meat processing to encase cuts such as roasts and hams. It helps maintain the shape of the meat during cooking or curing and can support more even cooking and curing.

Suprême

Breast of poultry with the wing bone attached.

Sweetbread

In beef and lamb, this is the thymus gland and is used as a food product. In pork, this is the pancreas gland and is used for pharmaceutical production.

Swiss cut

Refers to the close trimming of beef tongues. All bones, glands, and base muscles are removed.

T

Tallow

'Tallow' is rendered animal fat, most commonly from beef or sheep. It is made by heating the fat, such as suet, to remove impurities. Rendered pork fat is known as lard.

Tenderisation

'The process of meats becoming tender through natural processes like aging or marinating or mechanical processes like pounding or using a specialised machine.

Tenderloin

The tenderest part of the loin taken from under the short ribs in the hindquarters. Also known as a fillet.

Tendon

Very heavy collagen that forms at the end of muscle groups, such as a beef shank, which joins a muscle group to a bone at or near the exterior of a bone joint.



Thick Flank

This joint is also known as Top Rump good for slow roasting as a joint or braised in pieces. Also sold as 'stir fry' strips or flash fry steak. These can also be called flank steak.

Trimming

Refers to small pieces of meat usually produced as a by-product of a cut fabrication line.

Tripe

The cleaned and denuded beef rumen and reticulum. Tripe from the rumen is considered regular tripe. Tripe from the reticulum is called honeycomb tripe.

U

USDA

A federal executive department responsible for developing and executing federal laws related to farming, agriculture, forestry and food. The USDA plays a crucial role in overseeing various aspects of the country's food and agriculture systems.

V

VL

Visually lean. Usually attributed to trimmings and is the visual gauge of a meat to fat ratio. E.g. a 80/20vl has been visually gauged as 80% meat and 20% fat content.

Vacuum packaging

'Vacuum packaging' is a method of packaging food by removing air from the packaging before it is sealed. Reducing the amount of oxygen helps slow oxidation and microbial growth, helping to extend the product's shelf life and maintain its quality.

Vacuum packaging is widely used for meat and other perishable foods.

Veal

Meat derived from the carcass of young bovine animals, usually under five months of age. Veal is pale in colour, ranging from light to dark greyish pink.

Venison

Meat from any of the species of the deer family.

W

WFC | White Fatted Cow

White fatted cow. Specifically selected cow products that have a white coloured fat covering usually indicating a better quality of meat.

Wagyu

'Wagyu' is a term used for several breeds of cattle native to Japan. The name translates as 'Japanese cattle'. Wagyu beef is known for its high level of intramuscular fat, or marbling, which gives the meat its characteristic tenderness, flavour and texture.

Wagyu cattle are now also bred in countries outside Japan, although the characteristics and quality of Wagyu beef can vary depending on genetics, breeding and production methods. Kobe beef is a specific type of Wagyu produced from Tajima cattle in Japan's Hyogo Prefecture and is subject to strict production standards.

Weasand

The muscular layer of the esophagus.

Wet aging

Vacuum-packaged carcass primal and sub-primal sections for further and longer periods of aging.

X

XX

Usually used in terms of Lamb.

'Double X' is ex the suet and ex the breast. But the chump has not been removed.

XXX

Usually used in terms of Lamb.

'Treble X' is ex the chump, ex the suet and ex the breast.

Y

YB | Young Bull

A young adult male cattle that has been fed on barley to speed up the bulking up process.

Yield Grade

Yield Grade is a classification system used in the meat industry to estimate the amount of usable lean meat from a carcass. It is one of the grading systems employed to evaluate the yield of meat that can be obtained for processing and consumption. Yield Grade is often used in conjunction with Quality Grade, which assesses the meat's characteristics such as marbling, colour, and texture.

The use of Yield Grade, in conjunction with other grading criteria, helps meat producers and processors optimise the value of meat from slaughtered animals and meet consumer preferences for leanness and quality. Different countries may have variations in their specific grading systems.

Z

Zero Tolerance

A very strict inspection of the meat product to maintain all possible health hazards and upkeep of the greatest quality.

