



Culinary Academy

How to become a steak expert?

By Igor Sapega

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If you learn just one thing today from Igor Sapega...

How to become steak expert?

Cooking meat well takes practice. It's not easy to get every technique perfect the first time, so if the assignment didn't turn out the way you hoped, don't lose heart. Keep practicing, when you can, with the same recipe, until you feel comfortable with it. And you have to be brave! Learning to be bold enough to get your pan very hot, and to leave meat long enough to properly sear before moving it can take time.

Any meat that you want to be delicious should be bravely, boldly, nearly recklessly seared, going for broke and riding a ragged edge between *browned* and *burnt*. Timid searing and browning are absolutely no good. You want a hit of HEAT on that meat, so be a brave soul and lay it on whether it's a strip steak, chunks of stew meat, a pot roast that'll braise for hours, or even just ground beef going into a weeknight dinner. Make sure the meat is thoroughly dried. Water will keep the meat from getting hot enough as it touches the pan.



If it's not ground, pat it dry with a paper towel or clean dish towel, Possibly you can tie up the meat with a piece of string around it to keep the shape a little better. Get the pan hot. Really hot. This doesn't mean you need the highest flame — medium-high work — important to let the pan sit there for a little while it comes all the way up to an unflagging hot temperature.



Blue rare (46°/115F)- seared on the outside, completely red throughout. Meat remains gel-like in texture and difficult to chew, juices are not yet flowing freely



Medium (57°/135F)- seared outside, 25 % pink showing inside. Much drier and tougher than *The Perfect Steak*, but still palatable



Rare (48°/120F)- seared and still red 75 % through the centre. Once the heat transfer is completed during the resting period. *Definitely the perfect steak.*



Medium Well (65°/150F) done throughout with a slight hint of pink- Past the point of no return



Medium rare (51°/125F) seared with 50 % red centre. Just passed the point of *the Perfect Steak*.



Well done (71°/160)- 100 % brown. Waste of a good quality steak

Last, and potentially the trickiest step, The meat cook totally undisturbed. Once the meat hits the pan, you should hear it sizzle. (If it doesn't, remove it immediately — the pan is not hot enough.) Once that happens, give it a few minutes for the searing to actually take place and for the meat to darken and brown. Flip when the meat smells caramelized and dark this is a place to use your nose. Nudge the meat with a spatula; if it sticks it probably hasn't developed a good crust yet. When it releases cleanly you're getting there. Finish to add butter for more juicy flavours.