

On Roasting Roast Beef

It's not quite as simple as that: "Roast Beef" could come in a plethora of shapes, sizes, lengths, widths, heights... what cut are we using? How much does it weigh? How many minutes per pound (spoiler alert: this metric does not apply*)? How do we approach this array of potentials? Read on.

**Our "base 4" top-shelf dry-aged beef roasts that we offer at holiday time are as follows:
Beef Tenderloin · Standing Rib Roast · New York Strip Roast · Top Sirloin Roast**

Each roast could fall anywhere on the spectrum of weights and therefore surface area to mass ratios; thus each will take its own time to come up to your target temperature. All roasts will shine brightest from a flavor, juiciness, succulence, and tenderness standpoint by being cooked to medium-rare, which is 127 degrees fahrenheit POST-REST. Resting is one of the most important steps in executing the perfect roasting process, during which the inertia of the heat pressure will encourage the internal temperature of your beef to continue to climb after it comes out of the oven. You will want to top out at or around 127, which means that the more massive your roast, the lower the temperature you will need to remove it, as larger roasts will carry over more than smaller ones. Let's lay out the process.

Step 1: Season ahead of time

For most roasts, seasoning the night before will greatly improve the end result. Season heavily with salt and black pepper on all sides, returning – uncovered – to the fridge on a rack in its roasting vessel for the night. Uncovered? This will encourage any water that rushes to the surface of your beef (osmosis 101) to evaporate, retaining a dry exterior, which will aid in establishing a better sear - you can't sear water; a wet surface results in steam rather than caramelization. In its roasting vessel? Why not - this way, simply pull it out of the fridge on your feast day and you're just about ready to roll. On a rack? This prevents the roast from touching the bottom of the pan, therefore inhibiting conductive heat to the bottom of the meat, resulting in a more even medium-rare all the way through.

Step 2: Dressing your pan

After seasoning, consider lining the bottom of the pan with aromatics to boost the overall depth of flavor of your roast. Whole peeled shallots, quartered mushrooms, smashed peeled garlic cloves, handfuls of fresh thyme branches... build a palette of flavors. Perhaps wait until roasting day to pour a good glug of red wine or hearty beef stock into the bottom of the pan - some flavorful liquid will absorb the flavors of the aromatics and will readily accept any drippings, rather than allowing them to evaporate and burn on the bottom of the bare pan, distributing unwelcome burnt flavors all about your oven.

Step 3: Preheating & Tempering

It's the big day and it's go-time. Begin with preheating your oven well ahead, so that the walls of your oven can warm up as well, and when you open the door, all your heat doesn't rush out. Preheat to 425-450, depending on your ventilation. As soon as you have preheated your oven, remove your roast in its pan from the refrigerator. While your oven heats, the muscle will begin its ascent to room temperature. This is ideal to quicken roasting time, as well as to encourage an even cook. If the deepest part of your roast is significantly colder than the surface, it will take longer for the interior to come up to medium-rare, which will in turn mean that the outside rings of the roast will cook much past the medium-rare point.

The larger the joint, the longer you will want to temper it: smaller muscles such as tenderloin and baseball roasts will only need 30 to 45 minutes, where larger muscles such as Standing Rib, New York Strip, and whole Top Sirloin roasts will request 45 minutes to an hour. If using a string-probe or bluetooth thermometer (which we HIGHLY recommend), carefully insert it so that the tip finds its way into the deepest point in the very center of the roast, which will show you the lowest reading available. Set your thermometer temperature to medium-rare: for the smallest 1.5 pound baseball roast, set to 120F; for the largest fifteen-pound, seven-bone standing rib roast, set it to 112F, and find the midpoint for anything in between. Finally, now is the time to dump some big glugs of grenache or stock into the pan - just enough to cover the bottom by an eighth-inch or so.

Step 4: Searing

Once the oven is well preheated (has been at set temperature for at least 10 minutes), slide your roasting pan into the oven onto a rack that positions your actual protein - the roast itself - at the midway point between the two elements or heat sources. This way, radiant heat won't interfere with super-heating the bottom of the roasting pan nor the top of your roast. Close the oven door and set a timer for 15-20 minutes. The hot oven will sear the exterior of your roast, caramelizing to a handsome brown, boosting the visual, olfactory, and flavor experience. Bear in mind that the color will continue to build as the roast finishes, so if it doesn't look picture-perfect right off the rip, your patience will be rewarded.

Step 5: The turn-down

When your timer goes off, turn the oven down to 275 degrees, waft out some of that hot air, encouraging the oven to cool off a bit, and return the roast to the oven to finish. Check to ensure that you don't need more liquid in your roasting pan. From here, we play the waiting game - during this stage, your roast internal temperature is slowly rising. Monitor it and plan the rest of your meal accordingly, periodically ensuring that your liquid in the bottom of your pan doesn't reduce down to a burn. *While there is no golden ratio of "minutes per pound" to chauffeur you the finish line, you can assume that your roast will not cook before 10 minutes per pound have elapsed - so you can go throw the football, work on the puzzle, or mill the potatoes while your degrees slowly tick up.

Step 6: Resting

Your timer is going off. You need another 15 minutes to stir the risotto. Uncle Billy refills his Buffalo Trace for the fourth time (oh dear). Don't worry, your roast isn't done yet - in fact, it's in its most important stage of life - it must rest. Remove the pan from the oven, set it on a couple of trivets, and lift the V-rack out of the pan and set it down on a clean cutting board, ideally one that has a jus-catching moat around the perimeter (do your best to leave your string thermometer in the meat, so delicious juices don't shoot out of the hole, and also so that you can watch its temperature continue to rise). Tent it loosely with a large sheet of aluminum foil and set another timer (smaller roasts, 20 minutes; larger up to 45 minutes). While its temperature continues to climb, you can make good use of all that succulent liquid in the bottom of the roasting pan.

Step 7: Jus & Carving

Carefully strain the liquid from the bottom of the roasting pan, discard the aromatics, and mount the juices with butter, or follow up with your saucing plan accordingly. Meanwhile, if your roast is tied, clip the twine, hug the rib bones with a knife to remove them all the way (if yours is a rib roast), pour any accumulated juices shimmering on your carving board into your sauce, and slice the muscle perpendicularly to the grain, to a thickness that will please your guests. In most cases, this will incur a parallel slice to the twine ties. Plate, dose with sauce, and take a moment to sip your drink and pat yourself on the back. You deserve it.

~

Leftovers:

**It's ideal to leave the roast in one large piece;
it will retain juices and color better this way.**

**Once cooled to room temperature, wrap tightly in plastic wrap,
parchment paper, or foil, and refrigerate for up to 4 days.**