

MAKING



The great debate: Which city has the best steak, **Kansas City or New York?**

the cut

By Seánan Forbes and Steve Brisendine

LIKE WHAT YOU SEE?

Learn how you can make Bobby Flay's Spice-Crusted New York Strip on **page 42**

Kansas City or New York—whose strip is it?

The question isn't about a stretch of road, but a cow. Both cities name the cut, but which has the right to stake the claim? One writer from KC and one from NYC try to find out.

KANSAS CITY

HISTORY There's a reason one of Kansas City's nicknames is "Cowtown." The stockyards in the West Bottoms are no longer operating, but beef was a key component of the city's development. At their peak, the yards were the second busiest in the country, behind Chicago's, and employed 25,000 people. That's a serious bovine pedigree.

DEFINE THE CUT Mike McGonigle owns McGonigle's Market in Kansas City. His family has been in the meat business in the area since the 1950s. "The New York style is to cut everything boneless. The true Kansas City strip has the bone in. No one knows why it caught on that a boneless strip is also called a KC strip."

WHAT MAKES A GREAT STEAK? The key to the strip's appeal, Kansas City's meat authorities agree, is in the marbling (the distribution of fat throughout the meat). McGonigle's favorite cut is the bone-in strip. "The closer to the bone, the sweeter the meat," he says.



HIGH STEAKS...

WELL-DONE (A BARGAIN)

LUCKY BREWGRILLE

(\$22 for 12 ounces)
luckybrewgrille.com
913-403-8571

MEDIUM (AVERAGE)

JESS AND JIM'S

(\$28 for a 16-ounce steak)
jessandjims.com
816-941-9499

RARE (PRICY BUT WORTH IT)

MAJESTIC STEAKHOUSE

(\$49 for a 16-ounce steak)
majesticsteakhouse.com
816-471-8484

ALL IN THE

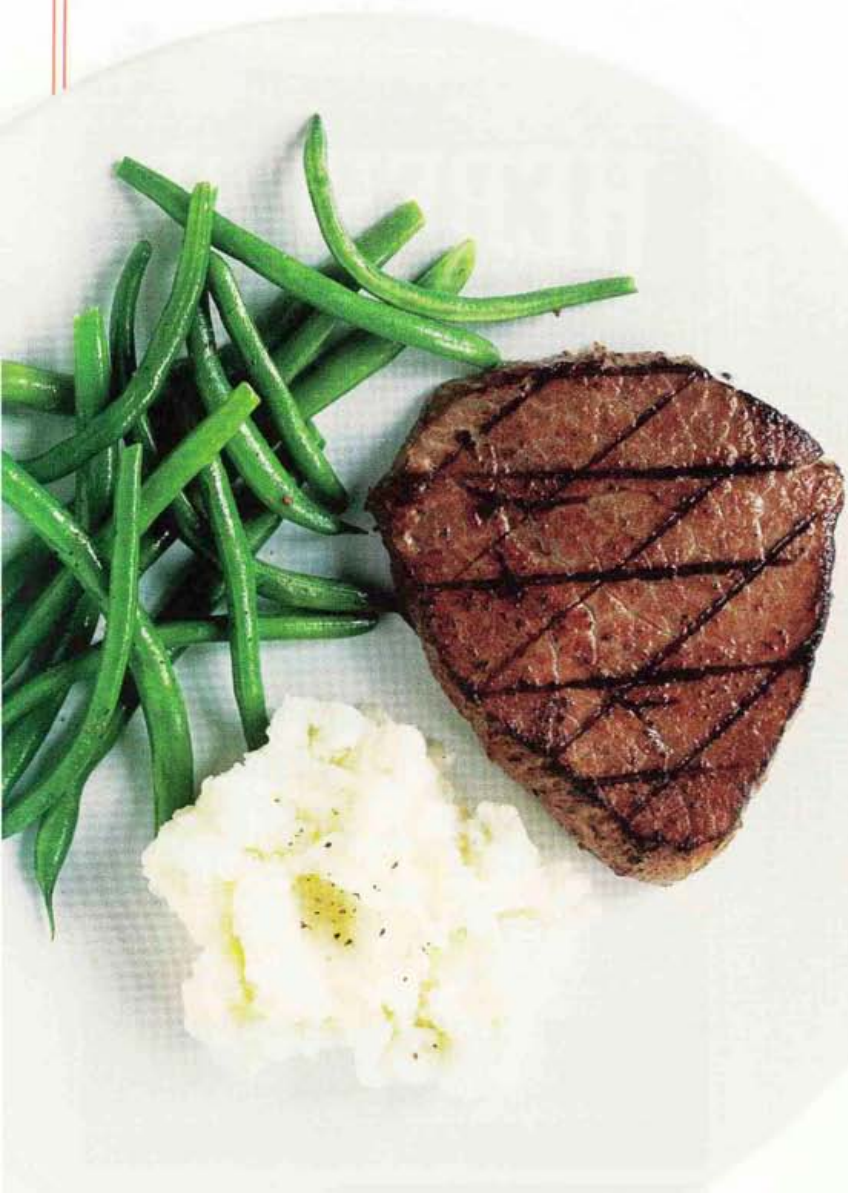
PREPARATION

The Majestic is a one-time cathouse and speakeasy. Its history might be shady, but there's nothing under the table about the way the strip is prepared. Chef Jim Nelson grills his dry-aged steaks over an open flame. "I know there are places that put them into a hot, 1,100-degree oven and sear them on all sides," General Manager Dan Tutko says, "but we like that grilling effect, the caramelization on the hot iron."

BEST HISTORIC STEAKHOUSE

Basics are best. Head to **Jess and Jim's**, a family-owned steakhouse that has been grilling meat since 1938 (although it did relocate in the '50s after a tornado). Everything from the piped-in country music to the signature pickled beets (that even beet-haters will love) says "small town." It's quaint, especially since the city has sprawled out to meet the formerly rural area where the steakhouse stands. The steaks are great, as are the drinks. Don't miss the miniature train that endlessly circles the bar.

NEW YORK CITY



HISTORY New York City's Meatpacking District wasn't always hip. In the beginning of the 20th century, more than 35 butchers and meat packers filled what had been called the Gansevoort Market. The city already had a chunk of history behind it—in politics and food. These butchers were considered their industry's cutting edge.

DEFINE THE CUT Frank Ottomanelli, whose father opened the family's Greenwich Village butcher shop in the 1940s, says it's called a strip because you shell the rest away. At Ottomanelli's, you can buy a strip either way, bone in or out—and it's still New York to him. "Kansas City strip?" he says. "I never heard of that."

WHAT MAKES A GREAT STEAK? According to Chef de Cuisine Cenobio Canalizo of the Strip House, true meat-eaters love the strip. John Schenk, the executive chef of the Glazier Group (owners of the Strip House, the Monkey Bar and Michael Jordan's The Steak House NYC) says a lot goes into a good steak. "It's a combination of how the animal is raised, how it's aged and then the third part is the cooking part. There are a lot of hurdles between that steak and that plate—and some of them are greater than you might imagine."

ALL IN THE PREPARATION Canalizo learned the kitchen from dish washing on up and says, "I love cooking meat." His strip steak comes with a head of garlic and a branch of rosemary and never wants for praise. Best-selling author Michael Gruber likes the sides at the Strip House, which serves the usual dishes with subtle twists: creamed spinach has black truffles, corn is laced with pancetta, and potatoes are fried in goose fat.

NEW YORK CITY

BEST HISTORIC STEAK-

HOUSE? Where the Strip House has a theme, O'Neals Grand Street has a past. A survivor of Tammany Hall, O'Neals has been a bordello, gambling parlor and speakeasy. The condo across the street used to be a police station, and what is now O'Neals' wine cellar served as a tunnel between the police and a quick drink. The carved wooden ceilings give O'Neals the air of a gentleman's club. Best on the menu is the dry-rubbed New York strip steak, which comes with Yukon gold mashed potatoes and spicy red onion rings. Choose your sauce: chipotle garlic butter, horseradish cream or blue cheese glaze. ■

HIGH STEAKS...



WELL-DONE (A BARGAIN)

MAXIE'S BAR & GRILL
(\$19 for an 11-ounce steak)
angelo-maxies.com
212-220-9200

MEDIUM (AVERAGE)

O'NEALS GRAND STREET
(\$27 buys you 12 ounces)
oneals.com
212-941-9119

RARE (PRICEY BUT WORTH IT)

STRIP HOUSE
(\$54 for a 20-ounce steak)
theglaziergroup.com/restaurants/
striphouse
212-328-0000

RECIPE

SPICE-CRUSTED NEW YORK STRIP STEAKS with MESA GRILL STEAK SAUCE

- 2 tablespoons ancho chile powder
- 1 tablespoon Spanish paprika
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 1 tablespoon dry mustard
- 2 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 2 1/2 teaspoons chile de árbol
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 4 12-ounce New York strip steaks
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- Mesa Grill Sauce

1. To make the spice rub, combine the ancho chile powder, paprika, coriander, dry mustard, oregano, cumin, chile de árbol, 1 tablespoon salt and 1 tablespoon pepper in a small bowl.

2. Preheat a grill to medium-high or preheat a grill pan over medium-high heat. Brush both sides of the steaks with the oil and season with salt and pepper. Rub one side of each steak with about 2 tablespoons of the spice mixture.

3. Grill the steaks, rub side down, until lightly charred and a crust has formed, 3 to 4 minutes. Flip over the steaks and continue grilling for 5 to 6 minutes for medium-rare; the steaks will be bright pink in the middle.

4. Spoon some of the Mesa Grill steak sauce into the center of each of 4 plates and top with the steaks.

From Bobby Flay's
Mesa Grill Cookbook

MESA GRILL STEAK SAUCE

makes about 1 3/4 cups

- 1 cup ketchup
- 1/2 cup prepared horseradish, drained
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons ancho chile powder
- kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

Whisk together ketchup, horseradish, honey, mustard, maple syrup, Worcestershire and ancho powder in a bowl and season with salt and pepper. **Cover** and refrigerate for at least 1 hour to allow the flavors to meld. **Bring** to room temperature before serving. The sauce will keep for up to 2 days in the refrigerator stored in a tightly sealed container.



MIDWEST AIRLINES offers daily flights to and from Kansas City and New York City. Details can be found at midwestairlines.com.