

# All You Can Eat

# TimeOut New York

## Pasture-ized meat



Eat

Some cows have a taste for the green stuff.  
By **Nancy Davidson**

Just when you thought you had a handle on terms like *organic* and *cage-free*, along comes another entry in the nutrition lexicon: grass-fed beef, or meat from pasture-raised cows that ate a diet consisting solely of grass or hay. So, why might you want to feed this, rather than the grain-fed variety, to your family? "Grass-fed beef tends to be lower in fat and calories, with a higher percentage of essential fatty acids—the good fats," says Lisa Young, Ph.D., RD, a nutrition consultant and adjunct professor at New York University. Cows that eat grass store more omega-3s (the same fatty acids as in fish, but without the risk of mercury) and conjugated linoleic acids (CLAs), both of which are believed to reduce the risk of cancer. Grass-fed beef also poses little risk of mad cow disease, because the beasts never ingested any animal by-products (a concern with grain-fed cows).

Before you alter your shopping list, be aware that the USDA's "grass-fed" label doesn't guarantee that meat is certified organic—that is, from cows raised on 100 percent organic feed, without hormones or antibiotics. In general, though, because these cows are less prone to digestive troubles than their grain-fed cousins, they're not as likely to have been treated with antibiotics. Plus, the animals usually are allowed to mature naturally, without growth hormones.

Grass-fed beef tends to have a heartier, more robust flavor than grain-fed. Jessica Applestone of Fleisher's Meat ([grassfedmeat.net](http://grassfedmeat.net)) maintains that consumers can often see the differences in the raw meats. "The fat is yellow from the chlorophyll in the grass," she says of her wares, which are sold in the retail shop at Williamsburg's Marlow & Sons and at sibling eatery Diner. "There's less marbling because grass-fed beef is leaner." Others, though, caution against relying solely on visual clues. Michael Baker, Ph.D., beef cattle extension specialist at Cornell University, says: "It could have no fat or could have a lot of fat. It could have yellowish fat or it

could be white. It's really tough to tell; you have to trust the label." He also warns against assuming that you'll be getting more omega-3s and CLAs; because there's less fat overall, the total levels of these fatty acids may be equal to or lower than what you'd get in the same size serving of grain-fed beef.

If you want to know for sure what's in the beef you purchase, it helps to find out exactly where the meat came from. Applestone advises, "Ask your waiter or butcher about their sources, and check them out on the Internet." For some, the extra effort is worth it. Ellen Lee-Allen of Tribeca says that health and environmental concerns mean there's only one choice when it comes to feeding her three-year-old daughter, Maya. "It isn't always easy to find grass-fed beef, and it's more expensive. But if I can't find it, I won't buy beef," she says. Happily for her, it's become more widely available: Lee-Allen was surprised to see it at her local Food Emporium. Grass-fed beef is also sold at Lobel's, Gramercy Butcher, Urban Rustic, Agata & Valentina, and Greenmarkets around the city—as well as at many local restaurants (see "Cattle call," opposite).

## Cattle call

**Back Forty** (190 Ave B at 12th St; 212-388-1990, [backfortynyc.com](http://backfortynyc.com)) hits the mark with a perfectly grilled, juicy and flavorful burger (\$10), served on a brioche bun with beef sourced from LaCense ([lacensebeef.com](http://lacensebeef.com)). Even french fries seem superfluous when the burger tastes this good.

The overcooked first attempt at **Community Food and Juice** (2893 Broadway between 112th and 113th Sts; 212-665-2800) was still tasty, but the second try for medium-rare was even better (the ultra-lean meat cooks quickly and can be a challenge to get right). Skip the limp zucchini pickles and vinegary coleslaw—this burger (\$12), made with Hardwick Beef ([hardwickbeef.com](http://hardwickbeef.com)), is best plain.

**Cookshop** (156 Tenth Ave at 20th St; 212-924-4440, [cookshopny.com](http://cookshopny.com)) serves a platter piled high with shoestring fries, a fat pickle spear, thick slices of smoky bacon and strong cheddar (\$15), all of which might be a bit much for kids. Ask for the extras on the side, and plan on sharing. Cookshop sources its meat from Pat LaFrieda, one of the last wholesale-only butchers in the Meatpacking District.

Order your burger medium at **Egg** (135A North 5th St between Bedford Ave and Berry St, Williamsburg, Brooklyn; 718-302-5151) to ensure the chubby, wonderfully beefy-tasting patty (\$9)—topped with roasted tomato and served with a salad or fries—is sufficiently cooked. The beef source is Dines Farms ([dinesfarms.net](http://dinesfarms.net)).

The slider sampler (\$8) is the way to go at **Maxie's Grill** (233 Park Ave South at 19th St; 212-979-7800, [angelo-maxies.com](http://angelo-maxies.com)). Three mini-burgers, made with hormone-free Buckhead Beef ([buckheadbeef.com](http://buckheadbeef.com)) and served with a choice of toppings, will keep hands busy and mouths happy.—ND