



The Beef about Roast Beef...how to get it perfect every time

Roast beef is one of life's great pleasures but a really good joint of meat doesn't come cheap so you'll undoubtedly want to get the cooking right. In theory, achieving perfectly pink roast beef should be a doddle: weigh the meat, heat the oven and roast for the prescribed amount of time. But it's not that simple. A quick Google search for roast beef brings up 198m results and the only thing they have in common is that they're all different!



Some recipes give cooking times and temperatures for a specific cut and weight of beef, while others offer advice on times and temperatures per 500g. Some recipes instruct you to sear the meat before roasting, while others advise a short blast in a ferociously hot oven followed by a slower, lower roast. Confusing huh.

But it doesn't end there. Choosing a particular cooking method still won't necessarily get you out of the woods. Cooking comes with any number of variables which can throw a googly at unwary chefs, and cooking beef is a great example. For instance, if your recipe instructs you to cook a 1.5kg piece of boneless topside for 1 hour at 200C, you might think that success is guaranteed. But if you forgot to take your beef out of the fridge a good hour or so before cooking it to bring it up to room temperature, and it goes into the oven fridge-cold, it won't cook correctly in the stated time. Likewise, if you want rare roast beef to serve cold, following cooking instructions for rare roast beef that will be served hot will leave you with dry, overcooked meat, not the juicy, ruby red feast you had anticipated because the meat will continue to cook, albeit slowly, while it cools.

So is there a secret to success every time? Yes there is! Here at Forkful Food we've come up with a foolproof method that cuts through the confusion and should ensure perfect results every time. You just need to:

- Invest in a digital thermometer (widely available with plenty of modestly priced options)
- Get acquainted with internal meat temperatures - these are the temperatures at which you want to serve the meat (for instance medium-rare beef would be 55-58°C)
- Factor in the effect resting will have on the end result - residual heat in the meat will continue to cook it (known as "carry over cooking") and can increase the internal temperature by 3°C to a whopping 14°C
- Decide on a cooking time and temperature (we usually do 20 minutes per 450g at 200°C for meat to be served hot, and 12 minutes per 450g at 200°C for cold rare roast beef - but you've got about 198m options to choose from!), and make sure your meat is at room temperature

- Follow the internal temperature guidelines in the table below. The first column tells you what temperature to take the meat out of the oven, and the second column tells you what the internal temperature you should serve the meat at.

Internal Temperature Guide for Beef:

Choose how you want your beef cooked	Remove your beef from the oven when it reaches the following internal temperature (if you are going to eat it hot)	Serve your beef when it has reached the following internal temperature
Rare	45-48°C	50-53°C
Medium Rare	50-53°C	55-58°C
Medium Well	55-58°C	60-63°C
Well Done	65°C	70°C

For rare to medium beef served cold, remove it from the oven when the internal temperature reaches 40-42°C. By the time it has cooled it will have reached 55°C - the perfect temperature!

And finally, if you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times: resting meat is really important. When you cook meat at a high temperature all the juices naturally retract into the centre of the joint. Resting allows these juices to redistribute back through the meat, making it tender, juicy and more flavoursome - and avoiding pools of blood when you carve it. I know, you want to know how long does this resting business take? As a rough guide, rest steaks for 3-5 minutes, and joints for 10-20 minutes - or follow the old chef's rule of 1 minute resting for every 100g of meat.

Perfect Yorkshire Puddings to go with your Perfect Roast Beef

- 350g Plain flour
- 550ml Milk
- 6 Eggs
- Salt & pepper

Whisk the milk and eggs together in a jug. Put the flour in a large bowl, make a well in the centre and slowly whisk in the milk mixture until you have a batter. If possible, make the batter a few hours or up to a day ahead.



While your beef rests, turn the oven up to 220°C. Put a little vegetable oil, lard or duck fat in the base of 8-12 Yorkshire pudding moulds or deep muffin tins and put in the oven to heat up. Once the fat is smoking hot, pour in the batter, return to the oven and cook for about 25 minutes until the Yorkies are well risen and golden brown. Serve as soon as possible.

Serve 4-6

Forkful Tip:

You can also make your Yorkshire puddings in advance and reheat them. As soon as they are cooked, transfer to a wire rack to cool (this prevents them going soggy). Reheat in a hot (200C) oven for a few minutes until heated through and crisp.

Yorkshire puddings freeze well. Allow to cool, then freeze in a freezer bag for up to one month. To cook from frozen, heat the oven to 220C/200C fan and reheat for 6-8 minutes.