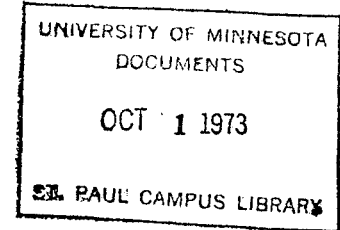


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Buying Meat

By Cost Per Serving



The cost of meat is becoming an increasingly important consumer concern. Some shoppers are selecting other sources of protein.

Many consumers, however, recognize that all meat is not priced the same. These consumers shop selectively. Selection criteria may include appearance, convenience, nutrition, palatability, and cost per serving (CPS).

Using CPS

According to the rules and regulations of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, meat not intended for immediate consumption where it is purchased must be sold by weight. Therefore, meat purchased at retail is sold by weight (lean, fat, and bone included).

Since meat cuts vary in their amounts of lean, fat, and bone, a shopper can estimate how much lean is in a particular cut and use this information to estimate CPS. CPS varies widely between different cuts. In some cases, it varies between the same cuts in two different stores. This is because of the extent to which meat has been trimmed of fat and bone. By using CPS,

you can go a step further than price per pound to decide which cut to purchase for a specific purpose and method of cooking.

Use of CPS also allows a greater variety of meat and meat products. This is because, per pound, boneless cuts with little waste appear expensive, but they are not so costly on a CPS basis. Thus, monotonous meals are avoided. CPS buying also allows comparison of the different species such as beef vs. lamb.

Using CPS, the shopper quickly determines how many servings a cut will provide. One serving is a cooked 3-ounce portion of lean. Recommended consumption in a balanced diet is two 3-ounce servings daily.

Don't forget two other considerations: cookery; and palatability. Some cuts, because of the nature and amount of their connective tissue, are suited only for moist heat cooking. Other cuts can be successfully cooked using dry heat. The cooking method as well as inherent characteristics of the cut influence flavor, juiciness, and tenderness. Factors such as marbling, color, texture, age of the animal, genetics, and the meat's aging, type, and amount of processing are just a few of the important factors in overall acceptability of meat and meat products. For more information, obtain University of Minnesota Extension Bulletins 376 (Pork for You) and 369 (Beef for You) from your local county extension office or write: Bulletin Room, University of Minnesota, 3 Coffey Hall, St. Paul, Minn., 55101.

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How to Figure CPS

CPS is a simple calculation that can be made while shopping. First estimate the number of servings per pound. To estimate this, use the following guide:

Then, cost per serving (CPS) = $\frac{\text{price per lb. as purchased}}{\text{number of servings per lb.}}$

Examples: Purchase Y, boneless, \$1.80 per pound
 Cost per serving = $\frac{\$1.80}{3} = \$.60$

Purchase Z, bony, \$1.30 per pound
 Cost per serving = $\frac{\$1.30}{1} = \1.30

Table 1 – Servings per pound of meat purchased.

Description of cut	Number of servings per lb.
Ground and stew meats	4
Boneless steaks and roasts	3
Some bone	2
Bony and fatty	1

Purchase Y costs 70 cents less per serving. This represents quite a savings, especially if the palatability of the two cuts are about the same. Proper cooking methods will reduce palatability differences between an expensive cut and a less expensive cut.

Below is a table which you can take with you to buy meat. The table has space for you to write your own CPS estimates.

Table 2 – Cost per serving of various cuts at various prices

	\$0.75	1.00	1.25	1.50	1.75	2.00	2.25	2.50	2.75	3.00	3.25	3.50
<u>4 servings per pound</u>	\$0.18	0.25	0.31	0.37	0.43	0.50	0.56	0.62	0.69	0.75	0.81	0.88
Ground meats												
Stew meats												
Liver												
<u>3 servings per pound</u>	\$0.25	0.33	0.41	0.50	0.58	0.66	0.75	0.83	0.92	1.00	1.08	1.17
Round steak												
Centercut ham slices												
Boneless leg of lamb												
<u>2 servings per pound</u>	\$0.37	0.50	0.62	0.75	0.87	1.00	1.12	1.25	1.37	1.50	1.63	1.75
Blade chuck roast												
Rib steak												
Pork chops												
<u>1 serving per pound</u>	\$0.75	1.00	1.25	1.50	1.75	2.00	2.25	2.50	2.75	3.00	3.25	3.50
Spare ribs												
Short ribs												

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