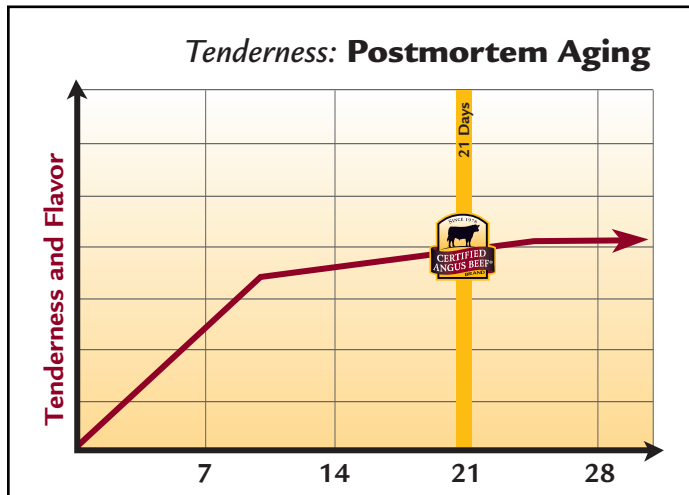




the **FACTS**

Aging Adds Value

Bottom Line: Fine wine and cheese improve with time, so does properly aged beef. Aging increases beef tenderness and intensifies flavor. For the best results, substantial marbling is required like the amount present in high-end Choice and Prime beef, such as the *Certified Angus Beef*® brand.



Aged to perfection

During aging, beef is held at a refrigerated temperature, typically 33° to 36°F, for an extended period of time. That's when natural enzymes in the meat break down proteins within the muscle fibers. This fragmentation improves tenderness and assists in the formation of more flavorful compounds.

The enzymes start doing their work after harvest, with most of the improvement in tenderness occurring within 10 days. Most beef sold in supermarkets is aged 5 to 7 days. In foodservice, beef is usually aged 14 to 21 days for more intense flavor. Some primals, such as top sirloin, benefit from more aging.

Wet Aging

- ★ Not all beef is aged, but the clear majority of aged beef is wet aged. This beef is refrigerated in vacuum packages where the air has been removed. Temperature is the most critical factor to be controlled.
- ★ Wet-aged beef offers a similar improvement in tenderness to dry aging, but dry aging is known for its more intense flavor.
- ★ Wet aging maximizes beef's flavor and tenderness yet does not require additional trimming or impact yield loss.
- ★ Some restaurants further differentiate themselves through extensive aging programs.



Wet Aging



Dry Aging

Dry Aging

- ★ The traditional method of aging, dry aging, is a rare art today. Less than 1% of beef is dry aged.
- ★ Fresh beef primals are stored, without packaging, on racks in open-air coolers. Temperature, airflow and humidity are controlled to ensure steakhouse flavor often referred to as “nutty” or “oaky”. Humidity is typically held between 70 to 80%. Temperature and humidity, combined with the use of ultraviolet light, controls bacterial growth.
- ★ During dry aging, the meat undergoes dehydration. Moisture evaporates from the outer surface, concentrating the meat's flavor inside – much like reducing a sauce.
- ★ The subprimals are carefully trimmed before cutting into steaks. This combined with dehydration can result in 15% or higher yield loss. Beef with less fat typically loses more weight and can pick up undesirable cooler odors.
- ★ Dry-aged beef is about 15 to 20% more expensive because of yield loss and the cost of maintaining a dedicated dry-aging cooler.

Making the best better

Certified Angus Beef LLC recommends most cuts be aged 21 days for optimum tenderness, juiciness and flavor. Licensed distributors offer many options for wet and dry aging as well as customized aging programs. Aging is a science that takes the brand's mouthwatering flavor and juiciness to its fullest potential.

