

## **The Forgotten Pork Cuts That Deserve a Comeback**

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One of the conversations I often have with students and home cooks is about respecting the whole animal. Pork gives us an incredible range of cuts, yet most people stick to chops, bacon and tenderloin. Meanwhile, some of the most flavorful cuts sit quietly in the meat case, waiting for someone who knows what to do with them.

Here are a few “forgotten cuts” worth rediscovering, especially as the weather turns cold and we lean into comfort cooking.

### **Pork Steaks**

These come from the shoulder, which means rich marbling and deep flavor. They do beautifully in a hot cast-iron skillet. Sear hard, then drop the heat and let them finish gently. A pan gravy practically makes itself.

### **Country-Style Ribs**

Not really ribs at all, but thick, meaty strips from the shoulder. They’re incredible braised with onions and broth or slow roasted until they just start to fall apart.

### **Coppa Roasts**

One of my personal favorites. This cut sits high on the shoulder and feels like a cross between a roast and a giant steak. Roast it like you would a pork loin but expect more flavor and juiciness. Talk to your butcher – this cut is unlikely to be in a general supermarket case.

### **Fresh Ham Roasts**

Think of these as the unsmoked, unglazed version of a holiday ham. They’re lean but full of potential. A slow roast with apples, mustard or winter herbs turns them into something special.

If you want a recipe to ease into these cuts, here’s the one I point people to most often:

### **Cast-Iron Pork Steak with Mushroom Gravy**

Season pork steaks with salt and pepper, sear them in a hot cast-iron skillet until deep brown, then remove and set aside. Sauté sliced mushrooms and onions in the same pan, sprinkle with a little flour and stir in a splash of broth. Nestle the steaks back in, cover, and simmer gently for 20–25 minutes. Serve with mashed potatoes.

Rediscovering these cuts isn’t just good cooking - it’s good economics and good resource stewardship. When we celebrate the whole animal, we honor the farmers, the craft and the tradition that makes Wisconsin pork what it is.

*Enjoy!*