



DIY Dry Aging

SUPERIOR STEAKS, AT HOME

by RACHEL HUTTON

Like a fine cellared wine, beef, too, can benefit from aging. Often butchers and steakhouses will dry-age primal cuts in well-ventilated coolers to tenderize the meat and spur enzymatic and bacterial activity that intensifies its flavor and adds a few funky flourishes. Following the appropriate safety precautions, dry-aging can be done at home, either with the traditional, open-air process or using packaging that lets moisture out and oxygen in (a Minnesota company, Umai Drybag Steak, sells such material online at drybagsteak.com). I recently let a hunk of dry-bagged ribeye sit in my 'fridge for a month, during which time the meat shrank slightly, darkened in color, and developed a jerky-like crust. I trimmed off its tough outer layer and sliced the ribeye into steaks. The texture was remarkably tender, juicy without being spongy, almost like ahi tuna. But the flavor didn't approach what I've had at restaurants, so next time I plan to wait 45 days.