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Pastured pork cut sheet: “EASY SPLIT”: Lots of smaller cuts.

First, some general suggestions when choosing cuts and when cooking your pork:

- ❖ Tell the butcher you want more fat left on your cuts. The fat from pasture-raised pigs is where the flavor is. Cooking with some fat on will make the meat more flavorful and juicy.
- ❖ Bone-in cuts will be juicier and have better flavor.
- ❖ You will always get some stew meat and some sausage as a result of the butchering process. You can ask for more of either or both, if you want. Sausage can be loose-ground, or linked in casings for an extra cost. Ask about sausage seasonings.
- ❖ Tough cuts have more innate flavor but need to be cooked on low heat for a long time (low and slow) to reach “falling off the bone” stage.
- ❖ Tender cuts need quick cooking on high heat to preserve flavor and tenderness so the outside is seared and the inside is cooked to temperature. Do not overcook! But you can almost always braise tender cuts and not have to worry as much about overcooking.

What follows are some suggestions for what cuts to ask for from each part of the pig if your goal is to split the half evenly among two families, or just have smaller meals without a lot of leftovers.

CUT	OPTIONS	COOKING SUGGESTIONS
Shoulder (the front of the pig from behind the head down to the top of the front leg)		
Shoulder blade steaks From the top of the front shoulder.	Bone-in or boneless	Braise or stew. Or cut up and stir fry.
Shoulder arm steak (“picnic steak”) From the lower part of the front shoulder.	Bone-in or boneless	Braise or stew.
Loin (runs along the back of the pig)		
Tenderloin	Have this cut in half to split evenly.	Marinate or brine, and grill or broil.
Country style ribs From the front (shoulder) end of the loin.	Boneless. Not actually ribs.	Braise or slow roast in oven or BBQ.
Center/rib loin chops From the middle of the loin along the ribs.	Bone-in or boneless if you want baby back ribs. At least an inch thick.	Grill.

CUT	OPTIONS	COOKING SUGGESTIONS
Loin (continued)		
Sirloin chops From the back end of the loin. Not as tender as other chops.	Bone-in or boneless.	Try braising. Or cut boneless chops for kebabs and grill.
Baby back ribs	If ordering bone-in chops, there will be no separate back ribs. Can be split into half-rack.	BBQ/Smoker. Or marinade, wrap in foil and braise in oven.
Belly: The underside of the pig		
Spare ribs These are the best ribs.	Regular or St. Louis style (cut evenly leaving extra "rib tips"). Can be split into half-rack.	BBQ/Smoker. Or marinade, wrap in foil and braise in oven.
Bacon (smoked/cured)		☺
Leg/Ham (the back end of the pig)		
Center-cut cured ham steaks From the middle of the ham.	Bone-in. Try around ½ inch thick.	Grill, pan fry, broil, or cut up to flavor soups and stews.
Cured ham roasts (Shank end and rump end)	Bone in. These are two smaller cured hams left over after slicing the center.	Oven roast.
Other parts		
Hock (lower part of leg)	Smoke.	Flavor soups and stews.
Jowl		Like pork belly
Neck, spine	Only one per pig! Ask if you want.	Soup stock
Fat		Render it and make lard
Head	Only one per pig! Ask if you want.	Head cheese, stock
Kidney		Meat pies, stews
Liver	Only one per pig! Ask if you want.	Paté