



Charcuterie: The Craft of Salting, Smoking, and Curing

Michael Ruhlman , Brian Polcyn , Yevgenity Solovyev

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Charcuterie exploded onto the scene in 2005 and encouraged an army of home cooks and professional chefs to start curing their own foods. This love song to animal fat and salt has blossomed into a bona fide culinary movement, throughout America and beyond, of curing meats and making sausage, pâtés, and confits.

Charcuterie: Revised and Updated will remain the ultimate and authoritative guide to that movement, spreading the revival of this ancient culinary craft.

Early in his career, food writer Michael Ruhlman had his first taste of duck confit. The experience “became a fascination that transformed into a quest” to understand the larger world of food preservation, called charcuterie, once a critical factor in human survival. He wondered why its methods and preparations, which used to keep communities alive and allowed for long-distance exploration, had been almost forgotten. Along the way he met Brian Polcyn, who had been surrounded with traditional and modern charcuterie since childhood. “My Polish grandma made kielbasa every Christmas and Easter,” he told Ruhlman. At the time, Polcyn was teaching butchery at Schoolcraft College outside Detroit.

Ruhlman and Polcyn teamed up to share their passion for cured meats with a wider audience. The rest is culinary history. *Charcuterie: Revised and Updated* is organized into chapters on key practices: salt-cured meats like pancetta, dry-cured meats like salami and chorizo, forcemeats including pâtés and terrines, and smoked meats and fish. Readers will find all the classic recipes: duck confit, sausages, prosciutto, bacon, pâté de campagne, and knackwurst, among others. Ruhlman and Polcyn also expand on traditional mainstays, offering recipes for hot- and cold-smoked salmon; shrimp, lobster, and leek sausage; and grilled vegetable terrine. All these techniques make for a stunning addition to a contemporary menu.

Thoroughly instructive and fully illustrated, this updated edition includes seventy-five detailed line drawings that guide the reader through all the techniques. With new recipes and revised sections to reflect the best equipment available today, *Charcuterie: Revised and Updated* remains the undisputed authority on charcuterie.

Charcuterie: The Craft of Salting, Smoking, and Curing Details

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From Reader Review Charcuterie: The Craft of Salting, Smoking, and Curing for online ebook

Jo Schnittman says

The most comprehensive book on the subject out there.

Marleene says

This is a very well written and comprehensively researched book. The illustrations, depicting cuts of meat or "how to" do specific tasks are very clear and lessen the disappointment of not having photographs of the finished dishes. I probably would have given a 4 or 5 star rating - but I don't eat pork. This is essentially a compendium of pork heavy recipes and techniques despite the inclusion of some beef, poultry and vegetable recipes.

Shane says

Great collection of information and recipes about an art that has fallen out of the popular conscience. I greatly enjoyed the narration and appreciated the resources in the back of the book. My only disappointment (and it isn't small) is in the complete lack of pictures. The choice could have been made for reasons of cost or convenience and either are valid. For me - pictures greatly enhance the experience and my desire to reproduce the author's creations.

Derek says

This book is a great primer in how to get started curing, smoking and making your own charcuterie. It's written by Michael Ruhlman, of "Soul of a Chef" fame as well as cookbooks for all of the Keller eateries. Not only does it give you a great overview of the history and origins, but provides technique and great step by steps and starting points from things like confit to lardo.

Jo Lin says

I decided to read this book more because I'm a fan of Michael Ruhlman in general, not that I actually wanted to make my own sausages.

As with Ruhlman's other books, this was a light, entertaining read. I'd have liked more detail on the technical/historical aspects of charcuterie preparation, but in all fairness that's because I wasn't reading this book as a recipe book per se.

That said, the recipes are easy to follow (kudos for adding pictures), and Ruhlman and Polcyn's passion for charcuterie is obvious and infectious. Think I'll draw the line at brining, though...

Kathy says

I received this book for Christmas and just finished reading it. I tend to skim many of my cookbooks, but this one I read cover to cover. I enjoy Ruhlman's writing (*The Making of a Chef*, *The Soul of a Chef*, etc) and in this cookbook he gives an interesting and informative, yet concise background on charcuterie. I wanted this book because I love eating charcuterie and wanted to try my hand at making some at home. I haven't tried any of the recipes yet, but Ruhlman states that they've been developed with the home chef in mind and most of them look manageable. I'll probably start out with what looks like the easiest one of all: lemon confit. Then I'll try duck prosciutto. Then I want to make my own pate, duck confit and rillettes. The sausage recipes look good too. And make my own bacon...mmmm...homemade bacon.

Jeff Kukral says

Christmas 2011 was what my wife called my meat themed Christmas. I got a meat grinder and sausage stuffer. And I got this book. I immediately started to read this book. I started doing my meat projects (and documenting them on my blog www.nobodybeatsmymeat.wordpress.com) and I was fascinated. My first project was home cured bacon.

With my meat bible in hand (this book) I have taken off down the road of meat curing. I am even trying to start a business all do to this book. I found my passion.

Robert shapiro says

Good read good recipes

If you want to smoke cure or Brian this is an excellent book.
I made the maple bacon and corned beef, they both came out delicious!

Nick says

I don't read cookbooks cover-to-cover but I've trawled through this enough to get everything I can out of it until I need a recipe.

Cool book, very interesting topic. It's fun to realize that food preservation was once a matter of necessity, but that even with refrigeration, canning, freezing, vacuum-sealing, etc. we still continue to salt, smoke and cure things because it tastes really good.

Many of the recipes are a bit out of my reach, I don't have smoking equipment and my climate doesn't really give me a place to hang meat to try, but I've actually made a few of the recipes including salt pork, corned

beef and fermented dill pickles. The DIY corned beef and fermented pickles were amazing, I would recommend everyone who likes to cook try to make these. Both are pretty easy, although take a lot of calendar time to allow for curing or fermentation. The real dill pickles were quite a treat, among the best pickled things I've ever had and a unique taste you're not likely to be served in a restaurant.

Mark says

The book gives a broad introduction to curing meat with salt, smoking (cold and hot), fresh sausages, emulsified sausages, dry-cured sausages, pates and terrines, the *confit* technique, *rilette*, and some highlights of sauces and condiments which traditionally accompany charcuterie.

I am most familiar with the techniques and recipes for fresh and smoked sausages and enjoy their treatment here. Of the hard learned wisdom I've picked up over the past 10+ years, there were no major tips I found missing or suggestions which I strongly disagreed with. This is a great introduction to home sausage making and includes advice for the home chef which was excluded from Great Sausage Recipes and Meat Curing: 4th Edition. I have referred to Ryttek's book as the bible in the past but would suggest Ruhlman and Polcyn's work here as a better starting point for the initiate.

The treatment of emulsified sausages, pates, terrines, and salume were all eye opening for me. The recipes don't require specialized equipment and assume that the cook has access to a food processor, stand mixer, meat grinder and an oven. The authors are very clear about which aspects of the preparations are vital (e.g. taking every precaution against letting the fat warm when preparing an emulsion) and which are less important (e.g. the specific type of terrine mold you use).

Aside from the recipes themselves, Ruhlman's passion for the topic shines through in each section. He makes a point to touch on the history, chemistry and safety of each of the major techniques prior to diving into the details. Ruhlman's near reverence for the topic at hand preempts the modern chorus of low-fat, low-salt crusaders. By celebrating the humble origins of charcuterie (what to do with the scraps of meat that we have no use for?) while simultaneously praising the more demanding baroque preparations, the authors have clearly made the case for charcuterie's place of prominence within our culinary hierarchy. That they have done this in a manner which is accessible and useful to the home chef is a triumph.

Minor ding from me for using grey-scale illustrations rather than color photos throughout. Particularly for cured meats, the color is an important aesthetic outcome as well as an indicator to the chef as to how the product turned out. This being a 10-yr anniversary update, color photos would have been great.

This book is a must-have for the dedicated home chef looking to up their game and at least a must-read for the novice home sausage maker looking for a solid reference to get started from.

E. Kahn says

I got Salumi together with Charcuterie, by the same authors. This review will cover both books.

Charcuterie covers sausagemaking while Salumi is about dry curing whole cuts of meat. Both books focus heavily on the Italian styles.

The books contain a great deal of information regarding their topic (the word charcuterie encompasses sausages, cured meats and other foods such as pates and terrines). Unfortunately, some of this information is incomplete, misleading or simply wrong. For a full discussion of errors, search the usual food-related forums.

The books themselves are very nice, with beautiful photographs. In my opinion, this betrays the principal weakness in the books: They can't decide if they're cookbooks or coffee table food porn. The text reflects this, with little essays and anecdotes about the authors' childhoods, travels etc. interspersed with the recipes and techniques. This is per the standard of foodie books, but frustrating for the reader who wishes the authors covered more ground and properly tested and proofread their recipes.

On the plus side, the books are informative (when they're correct...) and the many line drawings and diagrams included are useful for learning Italian-style pork butchering.

If you're interested in making Italian-style cured meats and can tolerate the silly filler, these are probably the books to read. Just remember to check online for corrections...

Mike Echon says

After reading Michael Ruhlman's book I feel more confident to approach charcuterie production at home. It's an interesting read with many formulations to help the novice on their journey to creating artisan meats and sausages in a safe manner. Although, I somewhat dispute the claim that you must add ferment culture and nitrite/ nitrate to dry sausages. I know this from eating and also making Croatian dry sausages with Croatian friends for many years that the only salt used was Kosher or Sea Salt at 2% the total weight of the meat. I also realize from a legal standpoint, claiming otherwise could lead to many lawsuits for the authors of the book if people were to in fact contract botulism. Better safe than sued. But other than that, the book is well detailed on all facets including the proper butchering of pig as well as explaining the parts of the pig and what types of food they create.

Lynda says

Well written and informative with recipes that are easy to follow, this is not a cookbook I would recommend to everyone. The corned beef that I made was delicious and time consuming. It took 5 days just to brine it. There are recipes that I will definitely use, but generally this book is aimed at foodies with the time to dedicate to the process.

Diane Thyer says

This is a fabulous book for anyone that loves charcuterie. It is on my bookshelf and I refer to it all the time as a reference and also for the recipes. Worth the investment

mj says

I want to learn to dry and preserve meats, and was hoping this book would teach me how to do so safely. It was a 300 page book with about 5 pages of useful general information on preserving food, and 295 pages of fancy epicurean recipes for doing so.

Mostly I learned that wet, thick, air dried preserved meats need nitrates, while thinner, quickly dried meats do not need them as much.
