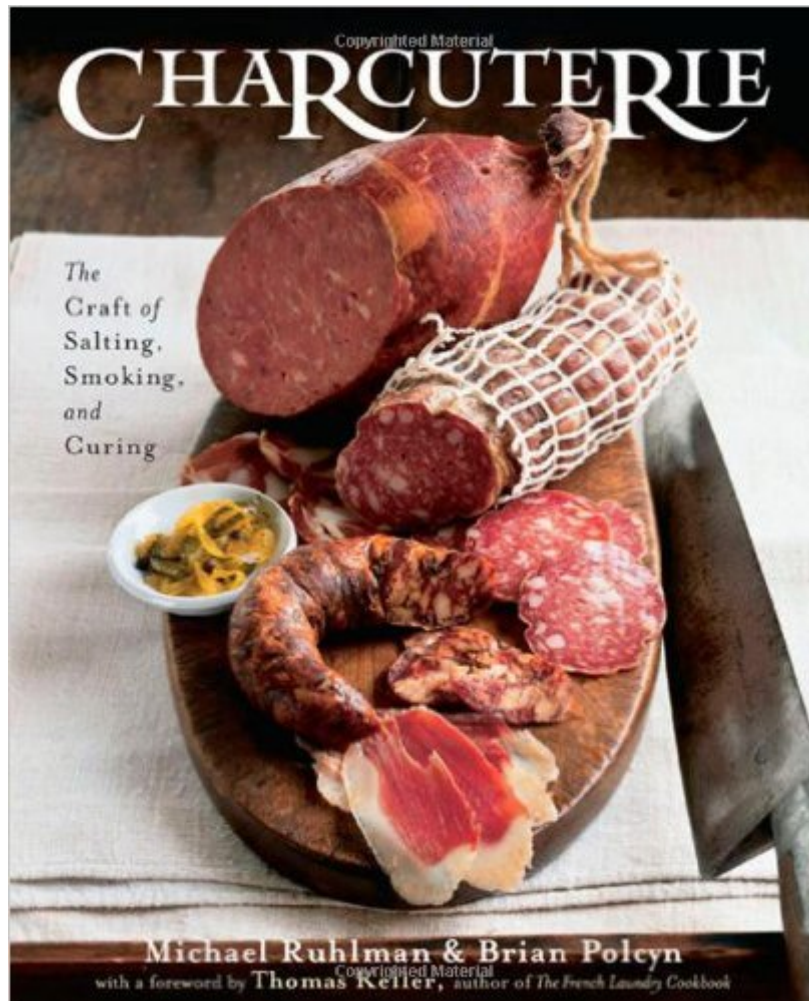


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Charcuterie: The Craft Of Salting, Smoking, And Curing



Synopsis

Charcuterie "a culinary specialty that originally referred to the creation of pork products such as salami, sausages, and prosciutto" is true food craftsmanship, the art of turning preserved food into items of beauty and taste. Today the term encompasses a vast range of preparations, most of which involve salting, cooking, smoking, and drying. In addition to providing classic recipes for sausages, terrines, and pâtés, Michael Ruhlman and Brian Polcyn expand the definition to include anything preserved or prepared ahead such as Mediterranean olive and vegetable rillettes, duck confit, and pickles and sauerkraut. Ruhlman, coauthor of *The French Laundry Cookbook*, and Polcyn, an expert charcuterie instructor at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, Michigan, present 125 recipes that are both intriguing to professionals and accessible to home cooks, including salted, air-dried ham; Maryland crab, scallop, and saffron terrine; Da Bomb breakfast sausage; mortadella and soppressata; and even spicy smoked almonds. 50 line drawings

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jane Grigson wrote the fundamental overview of charcuterie, and, under her influence, Fergus Henderson shared a handful of incredibly delicious recipes out of the charcuterie tradition. Filling the gap between them, as I see it, is Michael Ruhlman and Brian Polcyn's *Charcuterie*, an excellent, balanced, enthusiastic cookbook that steers home cooks into the fundamentals of meat preparations. The book is encouraging evidence that a significant number of Americans have awakened to the pleasures of well-prepared meat. This isn't a fringe publication: it is a beautifully-designed, well-written, premium production. And it's about time. This book does

something fundamentally right: it completely eschews the Joy of Cooking model of everything-under-one-roof cookbooks. It assumes that the reader has focused interests and is dedicated to food. It acknowledges that the food trades were [and sometimes still are] highly technical, and best performed by specialists. Though we might as well give up the possibility of becoming first-class charcutiers unless we're willing to give up our careers and pursue it full-time, we can find some real satisfaction in a book like this. It presents, in a clear, well-organized, concise format, the wisdom of a great charcutier, explained by a great writer. That wisdom, those years of experience, is evident in the clearest way once you begin using this book: the recipes are easy to follow, well-suited to the home kitchen, and, happily, result in meat products that are better than anything you can buy in an American supermarket. Far better. Even the more daunting preparations, the ones involving aging and cold-smoking, for example, prove to be remarkably accessible and easy.

Note: This review is based on my specific interests for buying this book, and may not be relevant to all readers. I was looking for information about making cured and smoked products such as bacon, smoked pork hocks, corned beef etc - foods that require sodium nitrites. Little has been published for the home cook regarding this topic - specifically, the minimum amounts needed for a given recipe without risking botulism. If you're concerned about nitrite intake and are a kitchen novice, I wouldn't recommend this book. Although I feel it contains worthy information to rate 5 stars, accessing and interpreting that information can be confusing: Information is illogically laid out and confusing, such as:- the informative chapter on salt, starts on page 30, then on page 35 suddenly discusses buying a whole pig, then returns back to salt on page 38.- The recipe for Cured Salmon (pp. 50-52) is illustrated with a page for preparing Smoked Salmon, but that recipe is on pg. 96. There is contradictory and confusing information, such as:- a reference to Bruce Aidell's procedure for Canadian Bacon, suggesting adding 2 teaspoons of cure (nitrite mix) to an All Purpose Brine recipe found on pg. 60. But on page 88, the recipe actually calls for 8 teaspoons - a 4x difference. [Note: Aidell's recipe in Complete Book of Pork calls for 2 1/2 tablespoons.] - The recipes call for cooking pork to an internal temperature of 150 degrees. But the Recommended Temperatures (pg. 62) states "130-140 degrees... for a finished temp. of 140-145." And the 150 degrees doesn't refer to stop-cooking temp or finished temp.

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