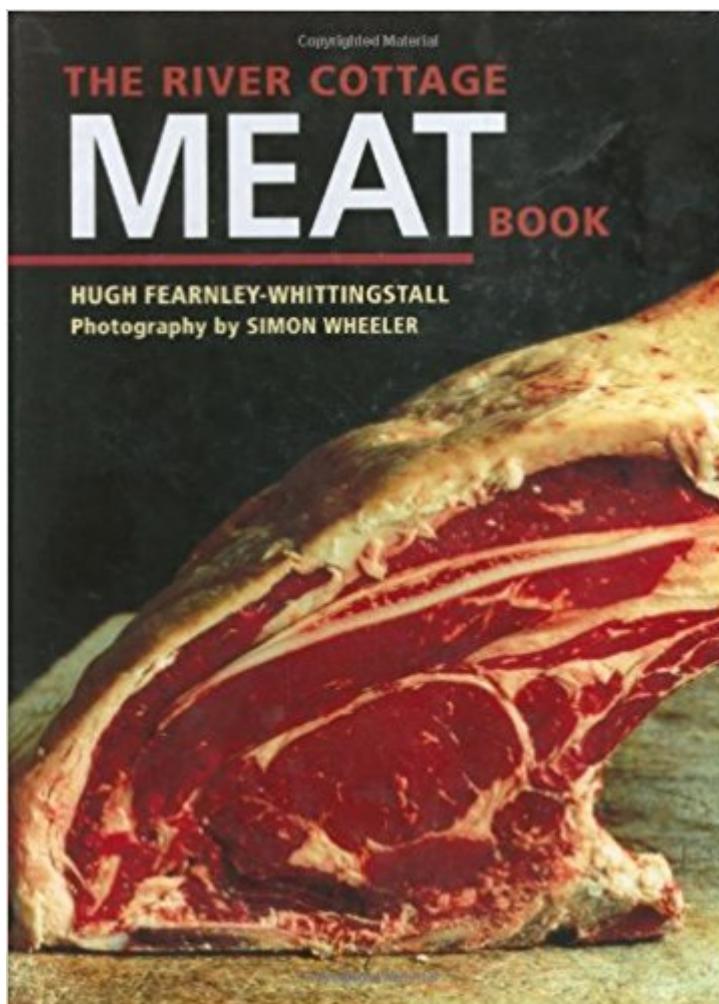


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The River Cottage Meat Book



Synopsis

First published in the United Kingdom, THE RIVER COTTAGE MEAT BOOK quickly became an underground hit among food cognoscenti around the world. Now tailored for American cooks, this loving, authoritative, and galvanizing ode to good meat is one part manifesto on high-quality, local, and sustainable meat production; two parts guide to choosing and storing meats and fowl; and three parts techniques and recipes for roasting, cooking, barbecuing, preserving, and processing meats and getting the most out of leftovers. With this thought-provoking and practical guide, meat eaters can knowledgeably buy and prepare meat for better health and better living, while supporting the environment, vibrant local economies, and respectful treatment of animals.

Already a sensation in the United Kingdom, this groundbreaking treatise on choosing and preparing meat is now available in the United States for the first time. Includes more than 100 recipes and more than 200 full-color photographs. Thoughtfully Americanized, with complete information about assorted cuts (including illustrations), production standards, and sources for buying and learning about meats in the United States. British edition has sold 150,000 copies.

Book Information

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Best Sellers Rank: #128,352 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #104 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking by Ingredient > Meat & Game > Meats #245 in Books > Reference > Encyclopedias & Subject Guides > Cooking #308 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking Education & Reference > Reference

Customer Reviews

Fearnley-Whittingstall (The River Cottage Cookbook) runs a farm, on 60 acres of land in Dorset, England. His is a voice full of expertise and respect for nature. If it has walked on four legs, chances

are the author has raised, slaughtered and/or eaten it. Thus, this densely constructed tome, first published in the U.K. in 2004, and now in a revised American edition, is worth most to those who know a good butcher. The sentiments are earnest, the mood a bit rainy and the recipes rustic. The first third of the book is dedicated to "Understanding Meat" and explores the different cuts of beef, lamb, pig and poultry. While the author abhors processed meats, he has nothing against offal and provides a comprehensive dissection of brains, lungs and stomach linings. The remaining pages are dedicated to the various ways of cooking meat, the copious rules to follow and hearty (at times primal) recipes that exemplify each technique. The fine section on roasting features a Loin of Lamb Stuffed with Apricots and Pine Nuts. For the brave slow cookers, there is Jugged Hare served in a sauce that contains bitter chocolate and the rabbit's blood. And the chapter on preserving covers not only bacon, but also Pigeon Pate and Preserved Goose Legs. (July) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

James Beard Foundation 2008 Cookbook Awards: Cookbook of the Year Award! • James Beard Foundation 2008 Cookbook Awards: Single Subject Category Winner! • "Droll, learned Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall has done the meat-eating world a big favor with *The River Cottage Meat Book* . . . The perfect book for mindful carnivores." • Boston Globe • Fearnley-Whittingstall confronts both the moral and gustatory issues surrounding carnivorism and provides 150 excellent recipes. • New York Newsday • Fearnley-Whittingstall asks us to take grown-up moral responsibility for the act of eating meat • certainly enough responsibility to inquire about how the animal lived and died. All this is spelled out at fervent (and deserved) length before we get near a bit of cooking instruction. Luckily, Mr. Fearnley-Whittingstall turns out to be as zealous a cook as he is a reformer, equally able to appreciate the simplicity of Irish stew or a good beefburger, or to lead people through the intricacies of pork pie or cider-cured ham. • New York Times • "Those who find that calves' livers and pig's trotters are best contemplated at a distance should keep well away from Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. Those of us with the opposite problem worship him as a god. This is not a case of macho posturing over a barbecue pit: There is more cooking know-how in Fearnley-Whittingstall's little finger than you will find in the graduating class of any cooking school in the country. His book is stuffed with wit, erudition, and one slow-cooked, lovingly constructed recipe after another." • NPR.org Holiday 2007 • One of the Year's Best Cookbooks: • "Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall is a brilliant, argumentative British cook and food writer . . . his recipes happen to be terrific." • Gourmet • #1 Cookbook of the Year •

Editor's Picks in Cooking

•Food & Wine

100 to Taste List

•Food & Wine

“This is one to read and cook from during barbecue season

•and to get inspired by the rest of the year.

•Bon Appetit

“A book to help us truly understand the philosophical and pragmatic aspects of the meat on our table.

•Boston Globe

“The ultimate reference for the serious carnivore.

•New York Daily News

“This guy gets physical with meat . . . A trencherman's manual of meat that includes recipes

•from down-home steak-and-kidney pie to more exalted fare like a salad of seared pigeon breast with pan-juice vinaigrette

•and graphic how-tos on buying and butchering, plus answers to questions you maybe never asked . . . More than you can digest? No doubt. More than you want? No way. Fearnley-Whittingstall's down-in-the-trenches humor and tone of earthy authority keep you coming back for another slice.

•Forbes

“His big, impressive meat book . . . has now been Americanized . . . Fearnley-Whittingstall is passionate and opinionated but not heavy-handed, and his sense of humor is evident throughout . . . A good companion to Fergus Henderson's *The Whole Beast*, this unique title will be important as both a reference and a cookbook.

•Library Journal Starred Review

“Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall believes that the animals we eat deserve respect, both for their sake and ours.

•Conde Nast Traveler

My best friend's wishlist disappeared into thin air. Three days prior to Christmas, she starts talking about disowning the lot of us if she didn't get her meat book. Good thing I'm a fantastic listener and remembered her mentioning wanting to learn more about cooking meat a few months back. I'd done my own research and ended up with *River Cottage* instead of whatever was on her list, but she's already read through a good bit of it and says it's awesome. To me, it looked like a LOT of text and not enough pictures. I guess that text is full of useful information or something. She's already relayed some info and it seems like this book will stay in the mix as a reference for years to come.

This is a quirky book. The character of the author is evident on every page. I love the idiosyncratic tone of the book. The author is very opinionated but not in an offensive way. His opinions are based on knowledge and a commitment to healthy honest food. Any cook who wants to deepen his or her understanding of meat would be well served in investing in this book. It has some very appealing recipes and excellent insights. The recipes may not blow you away, especially if you are more than a casual cook but they are solid and tasty. I've made a half-dozen so far and have not been

disappointed. I read a review that one critic wrote indicating that it was a bit too "English" and there is a grain of truth to that criticism. It is very focused on England. However, the insights are still valid regardless on which side of the Atlantic you happen to live. I am glad I bought it and consider a valuable addition to my culinary library.

This book was my first exposure to Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, and it was long overdue. After having read it, I hope to eventually acquire ALL of the author's other books. I've reviewed more than my fair share of culinary offerings, but this one easily elbowed its way into my tight list of top favorites. I felt an immediate connection with the author, who clearly resonates to the reality that FOOD is LIFE. How we raise it, how we harvest it, how we prepare and consume it, and how we respect and revere the ENTIRE process as a whole, is a microcosm for how we revere, and partake of, the entire experience of life itself. Food **IS** Life. Our earliest prehistoric hunter-gatherer ancestors understood this implicitly, and documented their awe and reverence of that sublime truth in their sacred places (re: cave art), in much the same way that many modern religions still use the apt metaphor of sacramental food and wine as a metaphor, and vehicle, for communing with the divine. In other words, to me, this book is essentially a modern-day cave painting ode to our animal companions, upon whom we rely for our sustenance ... and who have not been getting the respect and reverence they deserve in these fast paced modern times of disposable convenience food. I have little doubt that the author's other books address their respective subject matter in the same reverential spirit.

What I liked:-----INTRODUCTION: The author opens this book with a philosophical fusillade on the subject of commercial "intensive farming" practices ... not only from the standpoint of being inhumane, but also because it results in meat of vastly inferior quality, and of poorer nutritional value to the soul. For many idyllic culinary daytrippers who've never before been privy to the sad realities of beakless 'battery chickens', turkeys unable to walk because they were bred for overdeveloped breasts, diseased 'downer' cattle pushed into slaughter pens with forklifts, and hogs driven insane by chronic overcrowding, this book will come as an eye-opening gut shot. He also goes on to wax poetically, and at erudite length, on both sides of the equally heated vegetarian vs carnivorian debate, and then dives headlong into a personal vision of more compassionate and sustainable animal husbandry practices, more educated consumerism, and of everyone eating less meat, but of much higher quality ... raised compassionately, slaughtered humanely, matured properly, and then prepared with proper reverence, skill, and minimal waste. Personally, I don't think this book stands much chance of putting a serious fiscal dent in the harsh fiscal reality of "intensive farming" and our society's increasing reliance on food that's fast, cheap

and convenient ... but despite that, I admire the author, and I adore this book. If I could afford to leave the rat race behind, and live someplace a bit more bucolic, with a garden and a few animals of my own, and close friends with whom to make and share simple old world fare worthy of divine visitation, I would do so in a heartbeat. In any case, the introductory chapters alone are worth the entire cover price of this book.

RECIPES: Everything I like is in there ... educational information about meat quality and proper maturation, food philosophy, techniques for slow cooking, nose-to-tail eating, informative headnotes, etc.

What I Disliked: I only have a few nits, all of them fairly minor.

PHOTOS: Some of the photos are wonderful, but part of me wishes that all the rest of the photos within were of higher overall quality, and (in particular) that there were more and better procedural photos (ex: p.308 calls for trimming out the coarse ventricles of a pig's heart and removing sinews from a liver ... something less experienced culinary aspirants who've rarely, if ever, worked with offal before would doubtless appreciate pictures of). I also found myself pining for a few more photos of the pans and/or grills described in the various recipes, and more photos of finished dishes ... esp of the ones that the author clearly mentions are his favorites. In other words, I wish the book were as well marbled with photos as the beautiful beef on the cover is with fat.

RECIPES: This is just a minor nit, but more than a few recipes have not been optimized for the most efficient sequencing of steps, or the number of pans used. They also frequently omit helpful information, like recommended pan sizes. Not a big deal. Some of his seasonings are extremely British in their conservativism ... such has his wonderful braised trotters recipe, which I've found benefits from the addition of a little pineapple juice and star anise. Again, those are just minor nits.

SERVING SIZE: There are some minor inconsistencies with the stated number of servings a given recipe generates. For example, the Pot Au Feau recipe calls for 9-12 lbs of bone-in meat cuts, and serves 8-10, yet the Curried Goat recipe calls only 1/3 as much meat (4lbs) yet serves the same number. That's the sort of thing a good editor should catch.

This is probably one of the best books on meat available. Not only does it provide insight in to the selection and preparation of meat, it gives a lot of background in to meat production. At certain points in the beginning of the book, it's quite philosophical. There are sections divided in to numerous types of preparation (slow cooking, fast cooking, bbq) as well as offal. I've cooked about 4-5 recipes so far (pork belly, lamb breast, headcheese, rolled stuffed lamb shoulder as well as a few veggie side dishes). All were excellent, although the head cheese (brawn for the Brits) was not my bag. There are numerous recipes in the book similar to those I've prepared myself and they look quite good (osso buco, lamb shanks, different steak preparations). They have an Indian recipe that

looks awesome--Butter Chicken or Murgh Mahkani. My only complaint is that there is a certain vagueness in the book due to the book being translated from British English to American English. Things like English mustard vs. mustard (powder or prepared). I have both on hand, but I'm sometimes confused with what he means. Also, he uses the word casserole for what I think he means as a large saute pan or small dutch oven. Anyway, this is minor and since I cook quite a bit, I'm not really at a loss, but the beginner might be confused.

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