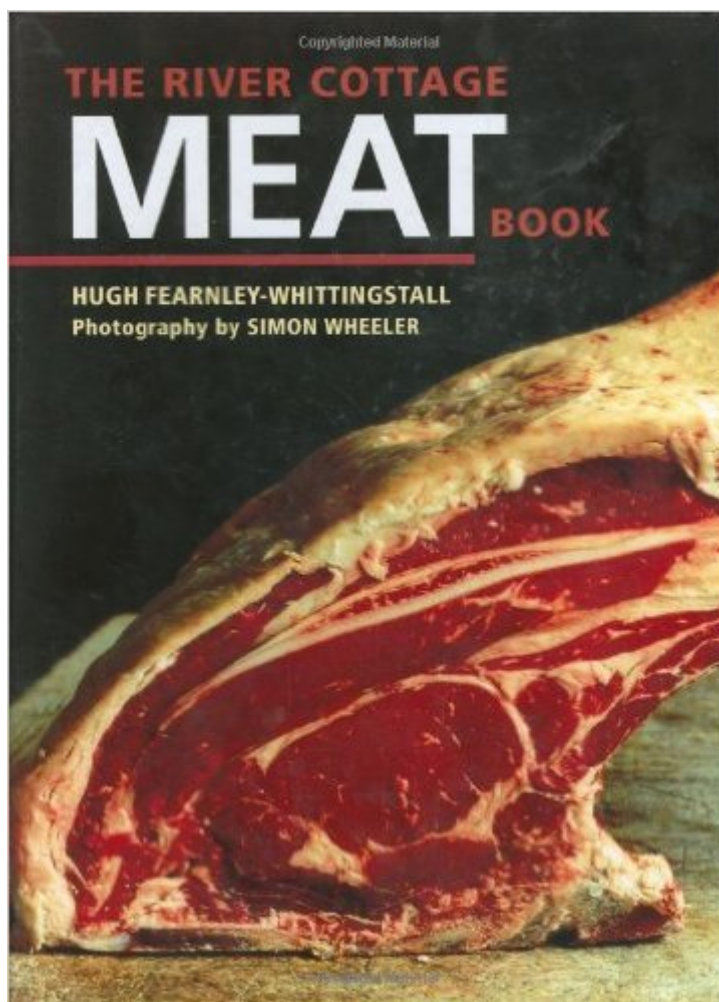


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The River Cottage Meat Book



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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Customer Reviews

I've had my eye on this book for a couple of years, but acquiring it meant getting it from the UK. Finally, it's available in an American edition -- complete with American measurements. Most of the text is the same as in the UK (so he's referring to British resources, not the least of which is the

availability of grouse and venison) but an afterward adds details for us Yanks. This is, without a doubt, among the most authoritative cookbooks I have encountered. It's less a collection of recipes than it is the "theory and philosophy of meat," except that description sounds dreadfully dull. And Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall is never, never dull. His text is engaging and entertaining as well as educational. He teaches you how to think about cooking meat successfully -- the steps and the scientific reasons behind them -- so that you can cook well without recipes. Roasting, for example, is a three step process: the half hour sizzle at high heat, the cooking (at 325-350), and the time in which you let the meat rest. This is not a 3-page vague arm wave. It's 19 pages plus pictures, and not a word is pedantic. The first section of the book -- 200 pages -- is called "Understanding Meat," and it begins with a remarkably thoughtful philosophical examination of the ethics of eating it. Fearnley-Whittingstall is a firm believer in treating animals well, and the health reasons we must do so; as a result, you'll be convinced to buy organic and farm-raised meat rather than mass produced stuff. If you aren't already. Anyway, he has chapters on beef and veal; lamb and mutton; pork and bacon; poultry; game; and offal. Each explains how to shop for the stuff, what the different cuts are, relevant instruction (how to joint a chicken or skin a rabbit -- the latter a necessity if your supplier is the local hunter), and so on. There's more than you'd find in most cookbooks: poultry isn't just chicken, but also turkey, duck, geese, guinea fowl, and quail. Part Two is about cooking the meat, and chapters are devoted to each method: roasting, slow cooking, fast cooking (such as frying), barbecuing, preserving and processing (curing, sausages, etc.), and "meat thrift," which tells you how to make stock and soup and to use leftovers. Each of those chapters goes into wonderfully exhaustive detail... and then there are the recipes. I'm sure the recipes are chosen largely to illuminate some part of his instruction, but heck, you could ignore all the rest and just pay attention to the recipes... and the photos, which make me think, "Heck yeah, we need to have a party, so I can serve this 'serves 20 or more' 'Aromatic shoulder of pork Donnie Brasco'!" (a whole shoulder of pork slow-cooked with garlic, five spice powder, chile, and soy sauce). I have my eye on his Oxtail-and-Tongue braise with rich red wine sauce. I'm screwing up my courage to try his deviled kidneys (if anything could convince me, this would be it). And when I'm ready to roast a full roast beef, these are the instructions I'll turn to. Awesome book. I'm in love. You'll pry it out of my cold, dead hands.

I have always had a huge respect for Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. His cookery programmes have been amazing as they are more than just programmes. They are all about understanding food and its nature. He has effortlessly translated this into a beautiful and highly readable book. I was

engrossed in it from the start. His introduction about meat is amazing. By understanding the nature of meat, its production, slaughter, hanging and packaging, you can go a long way to understanding the nature of meat itself and how best to buy and raise it. In fact, it is all about really basic details in preparation - from how to make hams to how to buy the best kidneys and why. Hugh seems to be on a mission to make popular old favourites such as tripe and liver - I don't know how much success he will have in that area, but his explanation on why it doesn't necessarily taste too good now is definitely indisputable. I really enjoy his easy readable style, his discussion on best raising techniques of pigs for instance was fascinating. He has practised what he writes about, he raises his own meat, slaughters it and then prepares it himself. It is a bit disconcerting having a dead pig head starting a chapter, but then Hugh talks about using all the bits of a beast in his chapter entitled 'thrifty'. For those who don't want to raise and slaughter their own beasts, you will gain much from his other chapters - which meats make the best to fast cook (and why) and which are the best to slow cook. Both have why and how. There are chapters on slow cooking, cooking in wood fired ovens, and much more. The recipes are delicious and the stories about them interesting reading and all provide depth of background to the recipes themselves. This is one book which will be remaining on my shelf for years to come, it is easy to use, interesting, and provides fundamental knowledge. It has my highest recommendation!

I ordered this as a birthday gift for a carnivorous friend and have spent half a day curled up with it. Far more than a cookbook, *The River Cottage Meat Book* is an engagingly-written short course in animal husbandry and the butcher's art, accompanied by glorious photographs of British farm life, sizzling kebabs and perfectly marbled beef. We are forced to think long and hard about the meat we eat. What breed of animal did it come from? How/where was the animal raised? What did it eat? Do we respect the sacrifice it has made? We are encouraged to do a bit of soul-searching about our own food practices. After several chapters devoted to each of the common and many of the not-so-common animals eaten by humans, the author begins his treatment of meat preparation. Each method is thoroughly explored, before we get his recipes, which run the gamut from Roast Belly of Pork with Applesauce to Spaghetti Bolognese, from Shepherd's Pie to Terrine of Sweetbreads with a Broad Bean Puree. We also get a chapter on "The Trimmings", for great side-dishes to serve with meat main courses. For me the only drawbacks are that U.S. cooks need to convert measurements in some instances, and that I had to wait a couple of months for the book to arrive from . This book is a must-read for meat eaters who appreciate thoughtful food writing and a straightforward, knowledgeable, unpretentious approach to a food that is a staple for many of us.

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