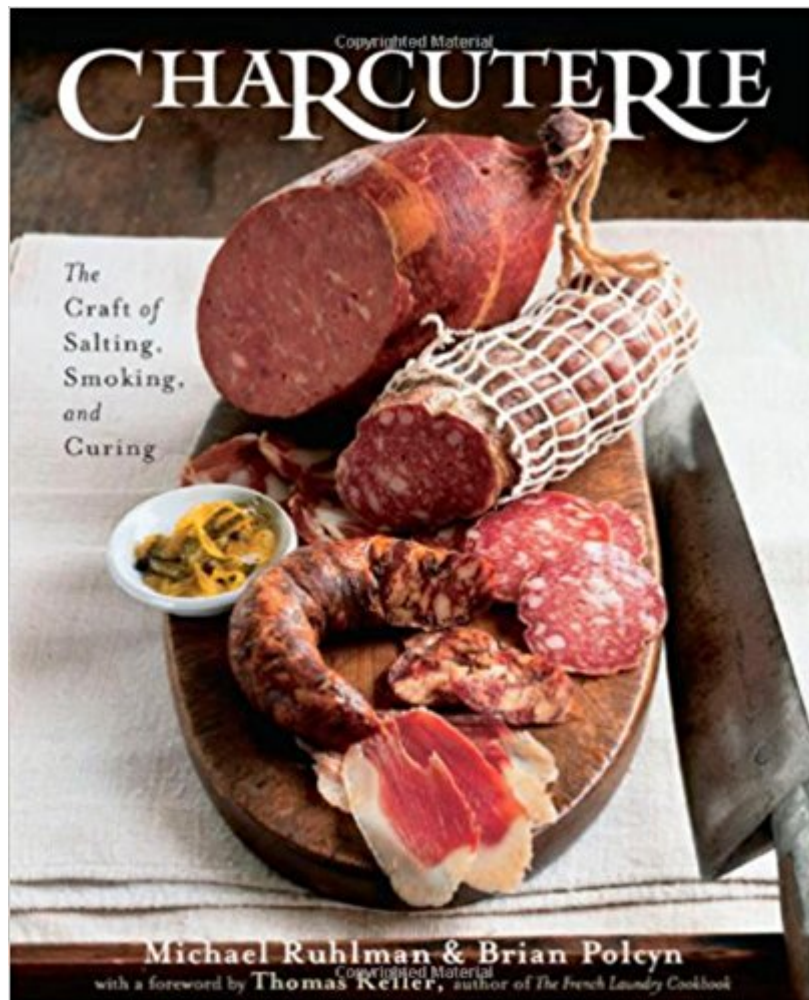




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# Charcuterie: The Craft Of Salting, Smoking, And Curing



## Synopsis

Charcuterie is a culinary specialty that originally referred to the creation of pork products such as salami, sausages, and prosciutto. It 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, airdried 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

Starred Review. Without the faintest hint of apology, Ruhlman and Polcyn present an arsenal of recipes that take hours, and sometimes days, to prepare; are loaded with fat; and, if ill-prepared, can lead to botulism. The result is one of the most intriguing and important cookbooks published this year. Ruhlman (*The Soul of a Chef*) is a food poet, and the pig is his muse. On witnessing a plate of cold cuts in Italy, he is awed by "the way the sunlight hit the fat of the dried meats, the way it glistened, the beauty of the meat." He relates and refines the work of Polcyn, a chef-instructor at a college in Livonia, Mich., who butchers a whole hog "every couple weeks for his students."

Together, they make holy the art of stuffing a sausage, the brining of a corned beef and the poaching of a salted meat in its own fat. An extensive chapter on pâtés and terrines is entitled "The Cinderella Meat Loaf" and runs the gamut from exotic Venison Terrine with Dried Cherries to hearty English Pork Pie with a crust made from both lard and butter. And while there's no shortage of lyricism, science plays an equally important role. Everyone knows salt is a preservative, for example, but here we learn exactly how it does its job. And a section on safety issues weighs the dangers of nitrites and explains the difference between good white mold and the dangerous, green, fuzzy stuff. Line drawings. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Charcuterie is an important and definitive work which deserves to stand proudly and forever in every serious cook's kitchen. -- Anthony Bourdain, author of Kitchen Confidential  
Charcuterie provides an open window on the delicious possibilities available to the home cook and professional chef alike. -- Paul Bertolli, author of Cooking By Hand  
Michael Ruhlman and Brian Polcyn have opened the door for home cooks everywhere to experience the thrill of making charcuterie. -- Mario Batali, chef/owner of Babbo Restaurant, New York  
Never has the art of charcuterie been handled this thoroughly for the home cook. -- Lynne Rossetto Kasper, host of American Public Media's national radio series The Splendid Table  
The best techniques to cure, smoke and preserve meat in the tradition of the best charcutiers out there. -- Eric Ripert, chef/co-owner of Le Bernardin Restaurant, New York

I have not done anything like cooked my way through this book. But- I've made a bunch of things, and they have been great! The licorice-spices "gravlax" might be the show-stopper. It is utterly gorgeous, and I've made it several times; it may be the best salmon appetizer I've ever had. The corned beef and pastrami are excellent. I've been making my own corned beef for St. Pat's Day for years; it's relatively easy to add a hot-smoke and make it into pastrami. The pancetta is also excellent, though a bit more risky-seeming! And the bacon is gorgeous. None of these- except maybe the gravlax- is exactly easy or simple... but the results are worth it. There's also good info on confit (and one of these days I WILL make duck prosciutto!), and lots on sausages- which I mostly have not done. Not much on cold smoking, especially in a home environment, though we've experimented and have had some good results without a lot of specialized equipment. I really recommend this book.

This is a great resource if you're looking to get into grinding your own sausages and / or curing your own meats. It's well written, providing a nice blend of personal experience, science and history. The basics are well documented and the recipes (that I have tried) have all come out very well. My personal favorites are the smoked andulle and taso ham. He starts easy and basic, then takes you further down the path until you're amazing your friends and family with meat care packages the likes of which they've never seen. As for the bacon, let me say that I now only make bacon that I can't otherwise buy. Trying to make a maple or pepper bacon at home, when you can buy a good (perhaps not the best) quality bacon at Costco or your local grocery store for under \$5/lb is not worth it in my book. While not difficult, it just takes a long time. On the other hand, I used his technique and simple instructions to make an excellent savory bacon that is unlike anything else I've had. Think of it like brewing beer... you probably shouldn't get into it to save money or to duplicate a widely available commercial beer, but if you want to give your own twist to a style or to be able to proudly say "I made this", then it's worth your time and effort.

This book covers topics that most cooks would use at some point, including brining, making pate and jerky, and sausages and bolognas. I have prepared many of the recipes over the years, often using with wild game, with satisfactory to excellent results. When my results were only average, it was not the fault of the book. This book also makes a great gift.

I bought this book out of curiosity. I am always interested in trying something new. I was considering making my own salami. When I received the book it got put to the side and as life has a way of spinning us out of control I never got back to it until about 2 weeks ago. The instructions written in this book are very easy to understand and follow. I never thought I would think of making my own bacon. In my opinion, making home made bacon is one of the easiest (if not the easiest) recipes in this book. I gave it a try and everyone of my friends and family that tasted it, loved it. Anyone that happened to walk into my house while I was frying the finished product made a positive comment. I've made it twice already and next is Panchetta if I can ever locally find Juniper berries. If you want to buy 1 cookbook about curing your own anything, this is where you should start. You probably won't grow out of this book for a very long time. I hope this helps someone.

I bought this book in order to broaden my knowledge on the topic of charcuterie. After having received it many moons ago, I have found myself using it as my go-to reference whenever I delve into new charcuterie territory. While it is full of recipes, it is also an excellent reference for those

looking to learn the art. However, I am not so sure that it would be the best book to start with for someone who has never delved into this method of food preparation. The reason being is that the authors, who are both extremely competent in writing as well as cooking, occasionally suffer from the same problem that many formally trained chefs and cooks do: They sometimes over-complicate recipes. The "over-complication" isn't necessarily a bad thing, as it demonstrates the "proper" (read: the way that they were trained) method to prepare the foods. However, if someone is just starting out in charcuterie, they may find some of the recipes and techniques a bit daunting. Regardless, I would recommend that anyone who wants to become a home charcutier should have this book at their disposal.

Are you a fan of smoked meats? Cured Meat? Salted meats? Yes, yes and yes. Then this is the book for you. Michael Ruhlman takes the art of charcuterie and demystifies it through informative prose and extremely tasty recipes. I first came across Ruhlman when I was trolling the Internet in search of instructions on how to make homemade bacon. The information on his website was informative, easy to follow and resulted in the best bacon I've ever had. Period. I wanted to know more about how to prepare other meats such as corned beef, ham, sausages, etc. I figured that if his book even had one or two other recipes I could use, it would be worth it. Well, I've had the book for about three weeks now and I've already made bacon twice, a brown sugar glazed ham, Canadian bacon and I'm about to try a pastrami. I've become good friends with the butcher at my local market and I haven't even reached the part of the book that covers sausages! The recipes are not particularly challenging but many do take time. For example, bacon takes about a week but it is almost magic how a pork belly is transformed into apple wood smoked, maple cured bacon that is so much better than the stuff you find in the supermarket. I am enjoying this book immensely and I think you will too.

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