



Salted and Cured: Savoring the Culture, Heritage, and Flavor of America's Preserved Meats

By Jeffrey Roberts

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From country ham to coppa, bacon to bresaola

Prosciutto. Andouille. Country ham. The extraordinary rise in popularity of cured meats in recent years often overlooks the fact that the ancient practice of meat preservation through the use of salt, time, and smoke began as a survival technique. All over the world, various cultures developed ways to extend the viability of the hunt?and later the harvest?according to their unique climates and environments, resulting in the astonishing diversity of preserved meats that we celebrate and enjoy today everywhere from corner delis to white-tablecloth restaurants.

In *Salted and Cured*, author Jeffrey P. Roberts traces the origins of today's American charcuterie, salumi, and other delights, and connects them to a current renaissance that begins to rival those of artisan cheese and craft beer. In doing so, Roberts highlights the incredible stories of immigrant butchers, breeders, chefs, entrepreneurs, and other craftspeople who withstood the modern era's push for bland, industrial food to produce not only delicious but culturally significant cured meats.

By rejecting the industry-led push for "the other white meat" and reinvigorating the breeding and production of heritage hog breeds while finding novel ways to utilize the entire animal?snout to tail?today's charcutiers and salumieri not only produce everything from country ham to *violino di capra* but create more sustainable businesses for farmers and chefs.

Weaving together agriculture, animal welfare and health, food safety and science, economics, history, a deep sense of place, and amazing preserved foods, *Salted and Cured* is a literary feast, a celebration of both innovation and time-honored knowledge, and an expertly guided tour of America's culinary treasures, both old and new.

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Editorial Review

Review

"If, like me, you build food-based travel itineraries, you need a copy of *Salted and Cured*." **Wall Street Journal**

Foreword Reviews-

"The wave of interest in artisanal and fermented foods has made locally crafted cheeses, beers, and pickles a hot commodity at restaurants and farmers markets. Now preserved meats are bleeping bright on food lovers' radar?those salted, cured, and smoked meats traditional in most cultures, but which had fallen out of favor with health-conscious Americans in recent decades. Jeffrey P. Roberts, a Slow Food activist and food historian, debunks these fears about cholesterol and nitrates, and surveys the renaissance in locally produced salumi and charcuterie throughout the United States. Part history, part travelogue, *Salted and Cured* documents how farmers, butchers, and chefs nurture each other in the production of high-quality, sustainably sourced preserved meats in a variety of cultural and regional traditions. The author used his myriad connections to research a porkophile's dream journey, investigating the making of country hams in Virginia, the boudin and andouille sausage of New Orleans, the wurst of German and Slavic butcher shops of New York City, and the glories of the Midwestern meat-packing capitals. As more restaurant patrons and home cooks turn up their noses at the foodstuffs of industrialized agriculture, demand for meat that has been locally and humanely raised has increased. These products take time to age and cure properly and are most often sourced from small farms with slower-growing heritage breeds: a recipe for how production is currently far outstripped by public demand. Add in the rediscovery of what food writer Anthony Bourdain dubs "the nasty bits" (offal and other snout-to-tail parts of the piggy carcass), utilized lovingly and most fully in sausages and salamis, and you can see why these preserved meats are so popular today. An extensive bibliography, endnotes, photographs, and a list of producers offer opportunities to further explore unfamiliar types of meat products. The glossary at the back also helps reinforce the differences between salami and salumi, lardo and lomo, and all the spectacular meat treats in between."

"The survival skills of salting and curing gave our forefathers the ability to settle in a new country while attempting to dodge starvation. Today, multicultural Americans reflect a multitude of flavors as they refine the taste memories of home. Jeff Roberts tells the story of a nation as viewed through the country's curing closet, filled to the brim with heritage breed animals. From coast to coast, *Salted and Cured* tells the story of America from hot dogs to ham hocks." **Poppy Tooker, host of Louisiana Eats!**

"Even without recipes, this is a most delicious read! Jeff Roberts is not only passionate about salumi today, but he is also a skillful writer who deftly brings together the complex threads of his subject. Woven among

the players, the history, animal welfare issues, and so much more are some great stories. I relished them all.”?**Deborah Madison, author of *Vegetable Literacy* and *In My Kitchen***

“*Salted and Cured* is a story of immigrants in America. Not only did different immigrant communities arrive with their own butchery and curing traditions, but they adapted their techniques to their new corners of America. Whether you’re a gastronaut or a delicatessen denizen, Jeff Roberts is your man! He is your best guide to the people and places where you’ll find cured meats that resist the industrial meat system that deadens our taste buds, robs places of flavor and wealth, and condemns animals to the horrors of confinement.”?**Richard McCarthy, executive director, Slow Food USA**

“It is surprising how much intelligence, sensitivity, practicality, resilience, and love for the community and the land are captured in traditional products such as charcuterie. Within these pages, we are fortunate to come to understand how a product born out of necessity has become a symbol of identity, one that tells the stories of countless people and *peoples*.”?**Carlo Petrini, founder, Slow Food**

“Charcuterie is truly the preservation of time and place. Roberts focuses on the modern American artisans of meat through a global lens that honors the fabric of history that is woven with cultural food traditions. This book will forever change your perspective of the landscape of American cured meats.”?**Adam Danforth, author of *Butchering Beef* and *Butchering Poultry, Rabbit, Lamb, Goat, and Pork***

“Not too long ago, salting a ham and hanging it to dry was considered a simple act of economy and faith. Today, it is in many ways a revolutionary act, one that flies in the face of our industrial food production system. In this fascinating and richly reported book, Roberts introduces us to the renegade butchers, farmers, chefs, and charcutiers of America who wave their hams like freedom flags, who spread the salt gospel through their communities and across the nation, and who quietly tend to the fermented funk of their salamis like monks in prayer, all in the name of change.”?**Camas Davis, founder, Portland Meat Collective**

“While guiding us through the history of preserved meats, culminating in today’s neo-artisan food movements, *Salted and Cured* never lets us forget that we need art *and* science?and probably a little love?to create truly transcendent food. Jeffrey Roberts has created a testament to a craft, once a necessity, that survived commodification and is blossoming again. Get yourself some handmade meat snacks and prepare to dive in.”?**Gordon Edgar, author of *Cheddar***

“*Salted and Cured*, Jeff Roberts’s lively tour of the world of American preserved meats, is an informative and entertaining overview of new traditions rooted in deep history. The tale begins with a brief history of pigs and meat preservation, brings the pig and its enthusiasts to the United States, and then reveals, region by region, the evolution of the art and craft of cured meats in the United States, from the Atlantic, across the Midwest, to the Mountain States and the Pacific. At its best, our culture takes the old and delicious and generates innovative, bold, and delectable formats. *Salted and Cured* brings to life the story and world of salumi. Much to read and learn, much to eat and enjoy!”? **Kathy and Herb Eckhouse, La Quercia Cured Meats**

“I love this book! It is a chronicle of America’s unique relationship with pork. Jeff Roberts weaves together the stories of so many local and regional producers inspired by so many varied traditions that what emerges from the pages is a picture that is uniquely American. A great read for anyone interested in drilling down into the meat of both our emerging cuisine and our varied heritage.”? **Mateo Kehler, cofounder, Jasper Hill Farm**

“Always the educator, Jeff gives us a gift with *Salted and Cured*. He clarifies the mystery of why we love cured and fermented foods by digging into the culture and history of salumi.”? **Emilio Mignucci, vice president, Di Bruno Bros.**

About the Author

A resident of Montpelier, Vermont, Jeff Roberts is president of Cow Creek Creative Ventures, which is dedicated to developing solutions in the areas of agriculture and food policy, conservation, the environment, and community economic development. He was cofounder and principal consultant at the Vermont Institute for Artisan Cheese at the University of Vermont. His book *The Atlas of American Artisan Cheese* (Chelsea Green, 2007) was the first comprehensive survey of small-scale producers. He is a member of *Guilde Internationale des Fromagers*. He teaches the history and culture of food at the New England Culinary Institute, is a visiting professor at the University of Gastronomic Science, provides consulting services to a wide array of small-scale food producers, and is a frequent speaker in Europe and the United States on artisan food, sustainable agriculture, and the working landscape. His new book, *Salted and Cured* (Chelsea Green, 2017), examines the history and culture aspects of dry-cured meat from 1630 to the present.

During his career, Jeff was a meteorologist, museum curator and historian, and director of development at the Morris Arboretum in Philadelphia. From 1987–1994, he was associate dean at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. From 1995–1998, he was vice president of external affairs at the Vermont Land Trust.

For more than a decade, Jeff was active in Slow Food International and USA, including service as a director and treasurer of the national board. Locally he served as a director of the Central Vermont Community Land Trust, Vermont Arts Council, and Vermont Fresh Network.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ila Petty:

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