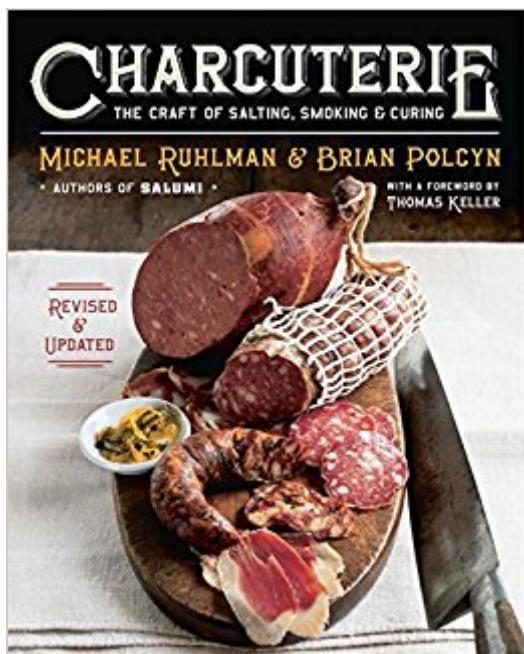


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# Charcuterie: The Craft Of Salting, Smoking, And Curing (Revised And Updated)



## Synopsis

An essential update of the perennial bestseller. Charcuterie exploded onto the scene in 2005 and encouraged an army of home cooks and professional chefs to start curing their own foods. This love song to animal fat and salt has blossomed into a bona fide culinary movement, throughout America and beyond, of curing meats and making sausage, pâtés, and confits. *Charcuterie: Revised and Updated* will remain the ultimate and authoritative guide to that movement, spreading the revival of this ancient culinary craft. Early in his career, food writer Michael Ruhlman had his first taste of duck confit. The experience “became a fascination that transformed into a quest” to understand the larger world of food preservation, called charcuterie, once a critical factor in human survival. He wondered why its methods and preparations, which used to keep communities alive and allowed for long-distance exploration, had been almost forgotten. Along the way he met Brian Polcyn, who had been surrounded with traditional and modern charcuterie since childhood. “My Polish grandma made kielbasa every Christmas and Easter,” he told Ruhlman. At the time, Polcyn was teaching butchery at Schoolcraft College outside Detroit. Ruhlman and Polcyn teamed up to share their passion for cured meats with a wider audience. The rest is culinary history. *Charcuterie: Revised and Updated* is organized into chapters on key practices: salt-cured meats like pancetta, dry-cured meats like salami and chorizo, forcemeats including pâtés and terrines, and smoked meats and fish. Readers will find all the classic recipes: duck confit, sausages, prosciutto, bacon, pâté de campagne, and knackwurst, among others. Ruhlman and Polcyn also expand on traditional mainstays, offering recipes for hot- and cold-smoked salmon; shrimp, lobster, and leek sausage; and grilled vegetable terrine. All these techniques make for a stunning addition to a contemporary menu. Thoroughly instructive and fully illustrated, this updated edition includes seventy-five detailed line drawings that guide the reader through all the techniques. With new recipes and revised sections to reflect the best equipment available today, *Charcuterie: Revised and Updated* remains the undisputed authority on charcuterie.

50 line drawings

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"125 accessible, flavourful recipes for cured meats, pickles and preserves." Sunday Express

"...celebrates real food and offers lots of recipes that are worth following... those who read it will learn enough basic principles to gain the confidence to experiment." The Field

Michael Ruhlman has written and coauthored many bestsellers, among them *The French Laundry Cookbook* and *Ratio*. He lives in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Brian Polcyn is the chef/owner of Forest Grill in Birmingham, Michigan, and a professor of charcuterie at SchoolCraft College in Livonia, Michigan.

If you want a beautifully written, lyrical account of one man's journey into sodium nitrite, this book is for you. If you want clear, consistent instructions that you can actually use to cure meat, this book is seriously deficient. I've cured and smoked bacon twice in the past couple of months. The first time, I followed a recipe that I found by Googling and it came out great. Everywhere I looked, though, I saw references to this book, and how great it is, and I figured I should probably break down and spend the money to get "real" instructions for bacon -- along with everything else contained herein. Ruhlman makes a point of providing weights (in grams) for everything, which is great. Hey, precision! So, I got out my scale and mixed up his basic dry cure. I read the instructions that say how much dry cure per how much pork belly, then weighed my two pieces of belly and measured out, to the gram, exactly how much cure I needed for each piece. I applied the cure, put the meat into bags, and put it in the refrigerator to let the salts, kosher and pink, do their thing. The first time I cured bacon, the belly produced a lot of liquid. This time, not so much -- even after a few days. Even though I was aware that every piece of meat is different, and what was happening could be totally normal, I started to worry that I had messed something up. I went back to the recipe, read it carefully, and realized the extent to which Michael Ruhlman is all over the place. It's almost as if he's engaging in providing inconsistent curing instructions as performance art, and fancies himself

Marina Abramovic. The first thing that I noticed is that he gives two recipes for dry cure. Both use 450 grams (equivalent to one pound, he says) of kosher salt and 56 grams of pink salt. The difference is that one uses 225 grams (equivalent to 8 ounces, he says) of sugar and the other 425 grams (equivalent to 13 ounces, he says) of dextrose. Let's first take a look at those conversions. It turns out that 450 grams is 15.87 ounces; that's close enough to a pound that I can't imagine that it'll make any difference. So far, so good. The 225 grams / 8 ounces is just this conversion cut in half, so that's fine too. But 425 grams is 14.99 ounces -- which isn't even close to the 13 ounces that he claims. Maybe it's a typo? Maybe it's unbelievably sloppy. The recipe finishes with an estimate of yield: about 725 grams if using sugar (731 using math, so that's okay) and 950 grams if using dextrose (931 using math, which is less okay). The difference between the two recipes is 200 extra grams of dextrose. Why the 225 gram difference in yield? More egregious is that he says to use 56 grams "of this mixture" per 2.25 kilograms of pork. Well, which mixture? If the most important thing is the nitrite/meat ratio, you have to use different weights of the sugar cure and the dextrose cure to achieve the same ratio for a given piece of meat. Does Ruhlman say which mixture? Nope. It actually gets worse from there. In the bacon recipe, he writes that "[i]f your belly weighs between 3 and 5 pounds...it's fine to simplify the method by placing the belly in the Ziploc bag, adding 1/4 cup/30 grams of dry cure [Ed: which one??] along with [spices]" and then in literally the NEXT PARAGRAPH writes: "[o]ne 3- to 5-pound...slab pork belly, skin on, Basic Dry Cure...as necessary for dredging (about 1/4 cup/50 grams)." In the space of one paragraph, a quarter cup transforms from 30 grams to 50 grams. Moreover, it says to use this amount for a belly between 3 and 5 pounds; 5 pounds is 67% heavier than 3 pounds, which is, you know, a pretty significant difference. So on one end of the instructions (30 grams / 5 pounds) he's telling us to use 6 grams per pound, and on the other end (50 grams / 3 pounds) it's about 17 grams per pound. Factor in the lack of reference to which version of the dry cure to use, and you could have someone "following the recipe" who uses 3x more nitrites on a slab of bacon than another person, also "following the recipe." Hey, maybe bacon is really forgiving and it doesn't really matter. But he doesn't actually SAY that anywhere. Instead he gives faux-precise instructions that function as a choose your own bacon adventure. And it does matter, at least according to the FDA. (Why? Because sodium nitrite inhibits botulism, which flourishes in the anaerobic environment found in, say, the smoker you're putting your bacon into.) The recommended level of pink salt is 1 ounce (28.35 grams) per 25 pounds of meat, or 1.134 grams per pound. (Google "how much sodium nitrite per pound of meat".) Ruhlman's sugar cure is 7.66% pink salt by weight and his dextrose cure is 6.02% pink salt by weight. If you use his suggestion of 56 grams of cure (let's go with the sugar cure to be generous) per five pounds

of meat, that works out to 0.857 grams of pink salt per pound of meat -- below the FDA's recommendation. With all the other combinations ... forget it, you can figure it out, but trust that they're all messed up. Wanna have your head explode? A small amount of Googling will lead you to a blog post Ruhlman made on his website in 2011, about a slab of bacon he cured, where he says to use cure equal to 5% of the weight of the meat. So, that's 23 grams per pound of meat -- a ratio way greater than any interpretation of what he wrote in his book. And he's explicit about using the sugar cure in the blog post, which means using 1.76 grams of pink salt per pound of meat -- well above the FDA's recommendation. It's absolutely maddening. So, my bacon. After a week in the cure it wasn't looking great. Not much liquid had collected, still, and it hadn't firmed up the way it was supposed to. I threw in some more salt -- not cure -- and left it in the refrigerator for three more days. It was looking better by the time I put it on the smoker, and when I ate some I didn't die of food poisoning. So, that's the best thing I can say about this book: it didn't get me killed. Maybe my expectations were too high, but I have to say that this book has been a massive disappointment. I plan on continuing to go through it and maybe look into making some of the other recipes, but only with a whole lot of verification. And, like I said, it's written in an engaging style -- but if you actually want to learn reliable information and have solid recipes to follow, I can in no way recommend it.

I own the original Charcuterie cook book by the same author. This reprint has been honed down, so I don't truthfully believe it's an improvement over the old book. This is a good book with comprehensive information about the art of Charcuterie, from descriptive explanations about the taste and method, to proper care and smoking techniques. It also represents unbiased differentiations on the curing with pink salt versus other methods. I am giving this as a gift, and though I would have given it 5 stars if it hadn't been trimmed down from the last version, anybody who does not own the last version will probably rate it significantly higher. Excellent sausage recipes, though!

Made maple bacon! That alone was worth a five star rating for this book! Going to try Canadian bacon next, then capicola!

Birthday present for my brother. He has picked up some good tips from this on smoking meats. I checked out the library copy and will use it next year for fermenting veggies and for sauerkraut. We both like the explanations for why you should use certain products and do certain techniques.

I recently got interested in sausage making and decided before jumping into some of the methods that requiring drying, smoking, etc, I should probably read up on it a bit, so I don't give myself botulism or something. Lots of info with clear instructions and recipes. Also provides tips on the best equipment to use.

This is a great book. I use it for reference frequently. It is very informative

As a Chef, I wanted to expand my horizon in this field and the recipes are simple and the book is simply informative.

I have about 20 pages book marked! I love this book and have tried many recipes already. I am amazed at how incredible everything tastes - you can taste all the ingredients. It's not just bacon, it's pork and fat and salt and smoke and pepper and I can taste them all! Now I know what salt pork in baked beans is supposed to taste like and it's divine. My only warning would be that so far all recipes have been borderline too salty for us. I don't know if this is due to my brand of salt/incorrect measuring or leaving it in the cures too long but I would not leave anything in it's brine/cure any longer than directed. Most definitely a prize possession in my kitchen!

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