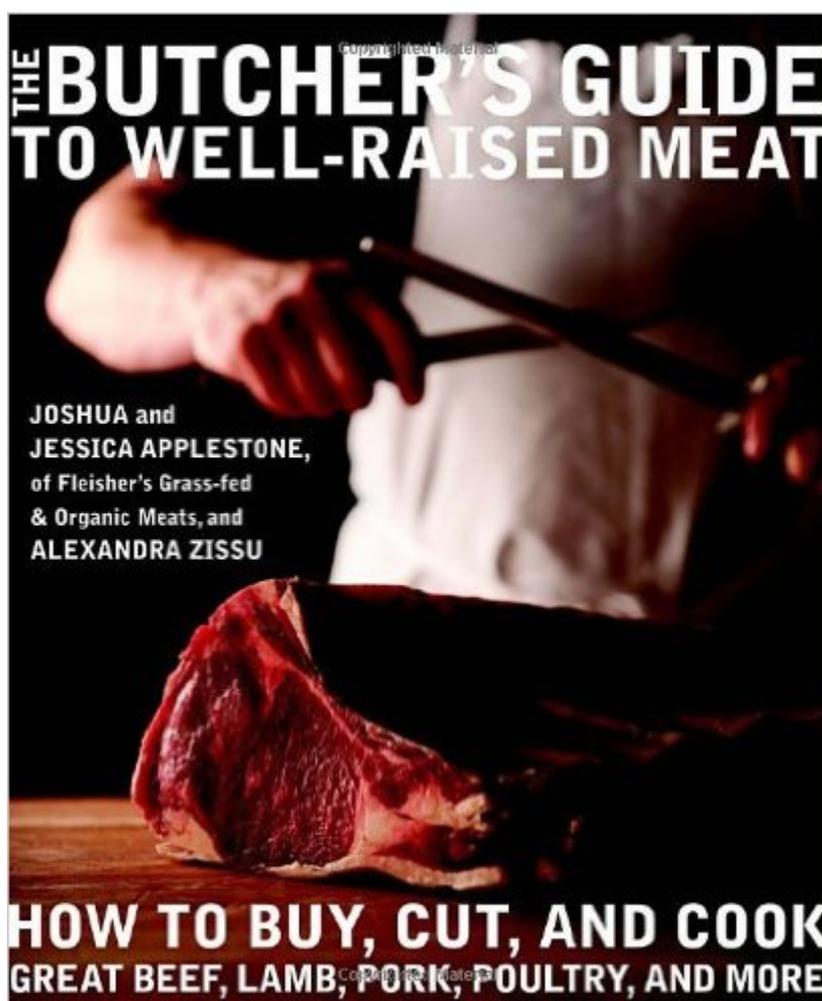


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The Butcher's Guide To Well-Raised Meat: How To Buy, Cut, And Cook Great Beef, Lamb, Pork, Poultry, And More



Synopsis

There is a food revolution sweeping the nation, changing the way Americans think and eat, and meat is at the heart of it. The butcher has reemerged in American culture as an essential guide in avoiding the evils of industrial meatâ”which not only tastes bad, but is also bad for oneâ”s health and for the environment. Joshua and Jessica Applestone, a former vegan and vegetarian, are trailblazers in this arena. They run Fleisherâ”s, an old-school butcher shop with a modern-day missionâ”sourcing and selling only grass-fed and organic meat. The Applestonesâ” return to the nearly lost tradition of the buying and nose-to-tail carving of whole animalsâ”all humanely raised close to their shop in New Yorkâ”s Hudson Valleyâ”has helped to make them rising stars in the food world. [The Butcherâ”s Guide to Well-Raised Meat](#) is a compendium of their firsthand knowledge. This unique bookâ”a guide, memoir, manifesto, and reference in oneâ”shares everything one needs to know about well-raised meat, including why pastured meats are so much better than conventional ones and how to perfectly butcher and cook them at home. Readers will learn which cut of steak to look for as an alternative to the popular hanger (of which each steer has only one), how to host a driveway pig roast, and even how to break down an entire lamb (or just butterfly the shoulder)â”all with accompanying step-by-step photographs. Differences among breeds and ideal cooking methods for various cuts and offal are covered, and the Applestonesâ” decoding of misleading industry terminology and practices will help consumers make smarter, healthier purchases that can also help change whatâ”s wrong with meat in America today. [Complete with color and black-and-white photographs, illustrations, and more than a dozen recipes, The Butcherâ”s Guide to Well-Raised Meat is the definitive guide to eating great meatâ”responsibly.](#)

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Customer Reviews

I recently switched my diet and lifestyle to "paleo" (lots of meats, veggies, good fats; no grains or processed sugars). Paleo highly, highly, highly encourages eating locally raised, grass-fed meats, which I have started easing myself into. However, I have found myself coming across the stumbling block of not knowing what to *do* with all these fancy (and expensive) cuts of meat, as well as not really understanding the differences between them. I started thinking that I needed to take a class or something so someone could sit me down and tell me all the things my parents never taught me (or apparently knew) about meat and how to understand it. Then, out of the blue, a friend of mine recommended this book to me and I figured this was exactly the sort of thing I was looking for. Although I was looking for technical information, I highly enjoyed the discussion and anecdotes about the owners' journey and learning curve. There are little glimpses of their love and dedication to their work (and each other) scattered throughout the book that make it very pleasurable to just read-through. There are also beautiful pictures (photos and pencil illustrations) that really help hammer home the point that working with such good quality meat is as much art as it is necessity. In terms of the actual information, the book is definitely just an overview. I got the sense that the owners sat down and made a list of all these random tips and tidbits they wanted to convey, and somehow edited them together into a book. These tips and tidbits are useful, don't get me wrong, but except for some large chunks, there wasn't a good sense of organization and flow.

The Butcher's Guide to Well-Raised Meat: How to Buy, Cut, and Cook Great Beef, Lamb, Pork, Poultry, and More is by Joshua and Jessica Applestone (owners of Fleisher's Grass-Fed & Organic Meats) and Alexandra Zissu. Since doggedly making their sustainable butcher's shop work against all odds, the Applestones have helped teach others to make it work for themselves as well. And whether you're looking to get into the butchering business or simply want to know how to prepare, cook, choose, and eat good meat at home, this book does a fantastic job of providing truly useful (and delicious!) information. Although the information on sourcing well-raised animals might be important primarily to the butchers themselves, I learned an awful lot as a consumer. Hands-on information makes it much easier to understand why it can be important to buy good-quality meats. I really like knowing the practical, factual information on how the various practices of animal raising

affect both the quality of the meat and the quality of life for the animal. All of that is included in here, in very concrete terms. Some of the information provided can make it easier for you to recognize good quality meats at the store or butcher's shop, and the Applestones are happy to tell you what questions to ask your butcher as well. There's even an explanation of various terms you'll find on labels, and what they mean--or DON'T mean. Each type of meat gets its own section--beef, lamb, pork, poultry.

I debated with myself between a 5 and a 4 star rating, deciding on 5 because while it's not a perfect book, my dissatisfactions are fairly abstract - voice, structure, intended audience - and this is in itself a very practical book. To understand what I don't here like requires first understanding what this book is - and isn't - and it's probably easiest to explain that by way of what I do like. Written by Joshua and Jessica Applestone, proprietors of Fleisher's Grass-Fed and Organic Meats (a butcher shop in Kingston, NY), with help from Alexandra Zissu, the book itself is divided into several sections, including a memoir-ish opening, a butchering and agriculture background section. Following is a section each on aspects of raising and butchering lamb, pork, beef, and poultry. Each of these sections has some basic info on the animal including cute pictures and nice descriptions of heritage breeds, what to think about when buying it and how one might go about cutting it up. The book winds down with sections on sourcing meat and listings of resources. Each of these sections had enough information for me, more than a brief introduction but not so exhaustive that I felt overwhelmed. Reading the book, there are lots of things to like, including an easy-reading style, ample humor, consistent vitriolic condemnation of factory-farming techniques, and good illustrations and photography. Beyond this, the book addresses several themes, including the history and current state of traditional agriculture, the (lost) art and science of butchery, and sustainable agriculture emphasizing meat production but also the place for humans in the food chain, e.g. sustainable jobs. All this is approached from the very practical position of butcher shop owners trying to make a living.

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