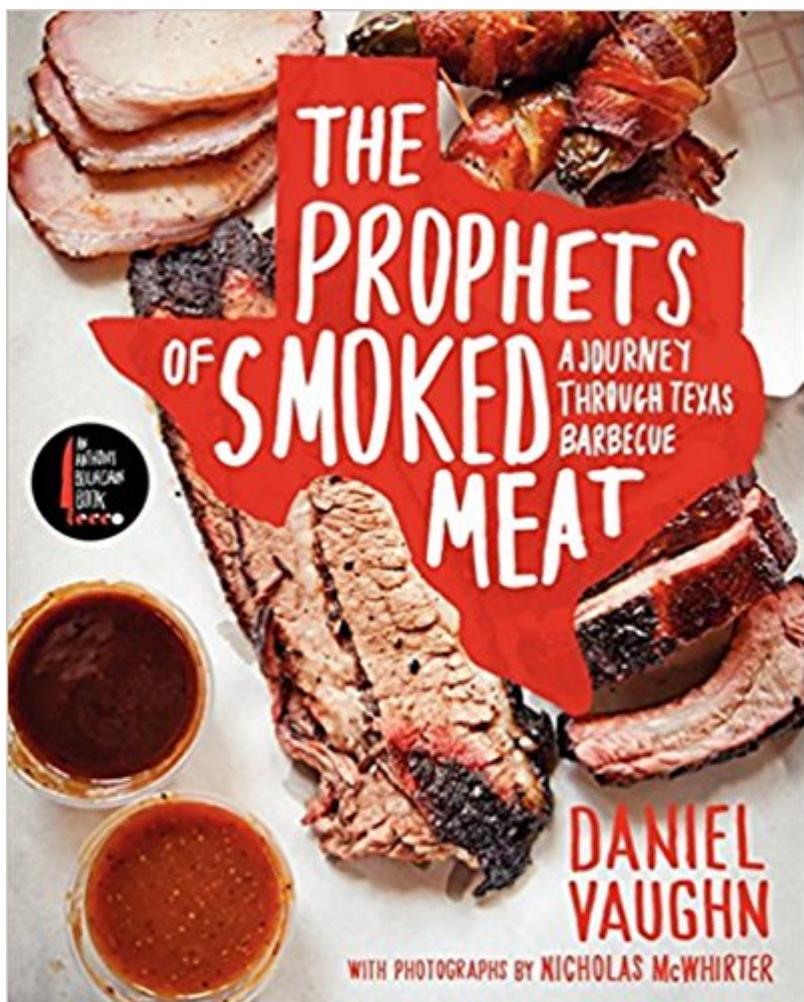


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The Prophets Of Smoked Meat: A Journey Through Texas Barbecue



Synopsis

The debut title in the Anthony Bourdain Books line, *The Prophets of Smoked Meat* by *Barbecue Snob* • Daniel Vaughn, author of the enormously popular blog *Full Custom Gospel BBQ*, is a rollicking journey through the heart of Texas Barbecue. From brisket to ribs, beef to pork, mesquite to oak, this fully illustrated, comprehensive guide to Texas barbecue includes pit masters™ recipes, tales of the roadâ "from country meat markets to roadside stands, sumptuous photography, and a panoramic look at the Lone Star State, where smoked meat is sacred.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

OK, here's the book in a nutshell: The author and a friend or two jump in the car each weekend and drive to as many different Texas barbecue joints as they can reach in the time they have, take a lot of pictures, and eat pretty much the same thing (brisket, hot links, and ribs) at each place. Then he writes about what they did or didn't like. Mostly what they didn't, because they seldom find anything that measures up to their standards. Apparently most BBQ places in Texas these days make good onion rings and peach cobbler, and that's about it. That's not an insult to Texas BBQ, but an observation that according to Mr. Vaughn, almost nobody does it right anymore. Of course that can be said about almost anything, anywhere. (As a personal aside, I love all kinds of barbecue, but how anyone could eat five excellent combo plates, let alone five *mediocre* combo plates in a twelve hour period is unfathomable to me.) I expected a lot of interviews with pitmasters, old-timers and the like but it seems that at most places the guy who knew what he was doing is long dead and the

current owners are relatively hapless. There is little here in the way of secrets, recipes, behind the scenes knowledge, or classic stories and legends. And apparently a shocking number of the places they stopped closed down shortly thereafter. The writing is fairly straightforward and quite amusing at times. The photography is excellent, although the author appears in most of the photos, so you kind of get to feeling like you're watching Uncle Harry's vacation slides after a while. This is not a bad book if you understand what to expect. That said, I can say I enjoyed reading it once (from the local public library) but it won't find a place in my permanent collection.

This book was a bit different from what I expected. Most of the books on BBQ have been dry and straight forward. This book trully chronicles an experience that I would love to have. The duo set there journey going all over the state and tasting the mediocre to the amazing. Texas is really an amazing place when it comes to the BBQ culture. Traveling just one-hundred miles can give you very different results. The photos help tell the story and this book is a very easy read. This is not necessarily a recipe book but the author gives a good idea what goes into most of the food. This book has helped inspire me even further to continue improving my meat smoking methods. I would recommend this book to anyone who is passionate about barbecue.

My review....1 star for finishing the book, having been in the writing profession in the past I know its difficult work writing and finishing a book. 1 star for the photos. That's it! If you are looking for something that goes into the culture of Texas BBQ....keep looking. I make my living as a caterer specializing in cowboy cooking and Texas style BBQ. I have read MANY books about BBQ that go beyond standard cookbooks. Nothing in this book will tell you anything about what Texas BBQ is, only what it is not. Texas BBQ is the most difficult of all regions and styles of BBQ. Why? because its all about the meat and smoke.. not rubs or sauces. Instead of profiling cooks and the methods they use and BBQ history... the book from the start is an never ending snobbish rant on the failures of Texas BBQ. I kept thinking that it would get better, however I suffered through page after page of negativism, forcing myself to keep reading. Unfortunately, it does not. BBQ has deep cultural roots in America, this book does its best to ignore that.

But it seems like 95% of the reviews are negative. Reminds me of a lot of highly critical internet reviews that I see on Yelp and elsewhere. I know that there is a lot of mediocre BBQ out there but he needs to dial back the negativity a little. I am a BBQ Judge and we have a term for it on the judging circuit, the "super judge." Nothing is ever good enough. The brisket is always dry or

overdone, the sauce is always too sweet, there is too much smoke or not enough smoke. If they don't have BBQ that hasn't been sitting around for a day or two, he shouldn't even bother sampling it, he should just find a place that does have something cooked that day.

As soon as you flip through the first few pages and see the beautiful images of small town BBQ spots around the great state of Texas, your stomach will start to growl. Dig into Daniel's words about the various styles of BBQ and the stories behind these local joints and you'll be ready to board a plane and hit the BBQ trail. This is a can't miss book to get a deep understanding of Texas BBQ and why it is so important to the history of the state.

I really wanted to like this book because it was published under Anthony Bourdain's Publishing line. It's a large hefty book that looks like it would be a great exposé of Texas BBQ, but instead it turned out to be more like reading someone's long list of Yelp reviews in diary form. It touches on some history and there are a few shallow tidbits here and there about barbecue, but the vast majority of the book is the author writing small repetitive critiques about various bbq places he visits. None really go into much depth, just repetitive thoughts about smokiness, rendered fat, and dryness. Every now and then he'll add in some back history about a bbq joint, but he avoids trying to connect the reader to the soul of any of the bbq joints, which sums up how I feel about this book - the book really lacks a soul. One positive aspect of the book is that it contains a lot of great photographs that do a much better job of conveying the soul of Texas BBQ, which is why I gave this review 2 stars.

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