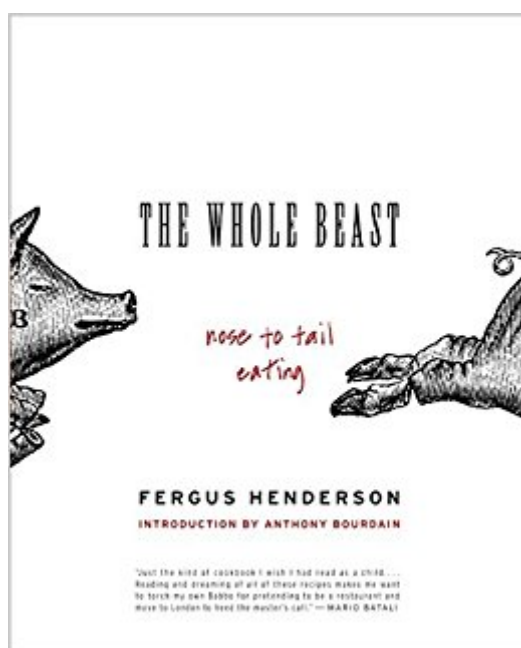


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The Whole Beast: Nose To Tail Eating



Synopsis

The Whole Beast: Nose to Tail Eating is a certified "foodie" classic. In it, Fergus Henderson -- whose London restaurant, St. John, is a world-renowned destination for people who love to eat "on the wild side" -- presents the recipes that have marked him out as one of the most innovative, yet traditional, chefs. Here are recipes that hark back to a strong rural tradition of delicious thrift, and that literally represent Henderson's motto, "Nose to Tail Eating" -- be they Pig's Trotter Stuffed with Potato, Rabbit Wrapped in Fennel and Bacon, or his signature dish of Roast Bone Marrow and Parsley Salad. For those of a less carnivorous bent, there are also splendid dishes such as Deviled Crab; Smoked Haddock, Mustard, and Saffron; Green Beans, Shallots, Garlic, and Anchovies; and to keep the sweetest tooth happy, there are gloriously satisfying puddings, notably the St. John Eccles Cakes, and a very nearly perfect Chocolate Ice Cream.

Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Ecco; 1st Edition edition (March 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060585366

ISBN-13: 978-0060585365

Product Dimensions: 7.4 x 0.6 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (100 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #73,926 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #16 in Â Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > European > English, Scottish & Welsh #58 in Â Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking by Ingredient > Meat & Game > Meats

Customer Reviews

I have to start by saying that I can prepare only ten of the thirty-four recipes in the meat section of this cookbook without special ordering, and thirteen are virtually impossible due to unavailability of ingredients. Lamb tongues? Pig tails? Quarts of pig blood? Lamb hearts? Forget it. I live near a large butcher who can't or won't provide any of these items for any price I can pay. They go to the dogfood plants. This is a pity, as anyone lucky enough to have eaten the flavorful extremities and innards of young animals can attest. Our American supermarket meat counters have for years whittled down the selection in favor of the most flavorless cuts: fillet mignon and chicken breast have taken the shelf space once dedicated to the "set of delights, textural and flavorsome, which lie

beyond the fillet", to quote author Fergus Henderson. As our cultural memory of the flavors of the parsimonious and creative farmhouse kitchen shrivels, our food is impoverished. Henderson writes a sharp critique of our culture of waste, but only as the byproduct of his central thesis: that there is a world of pleasure out there for those who set aside their suburban squeamishness and eat the whole beast. Among the few recipes I can follow without unconscionable substitutions are some real gems. Tripe and Onions, remarkably similar to French, Italian, Spanish, and even Mexican preparations, is delicious. Rabbit and Garlic is a powerfully aromatic feast. Beans and Bacon is a perfect rustic dish, a worthy simplification that could stand for cassoulet. Ox Tongue and Bread, really a carpaccio or hearty salad, is an excellent meal on its own, great with a simple and light red table wine.

Kudos to *The Whole Beast* by Fergus Henderson. This unusual cookbook is dedicated to recipes on organ meats. The delicious array includes warm pig's head, ox tongue, roast bone marrow, calf's heart, brawn (headcheese), jellied tripe, rolled pig's spleen, duck neck terrine, duck hearts on toast, many recipes for lamb's brain, sweet breads, blood cake (made with 1 quart of pig's blood), pig's cheek and tongue, gratin of tripe, haggis, deviled kidneys, lamb's kidneys and giblet stew. The one notable omission is steak and kidney pie. The recipes are exotic (or so they seem to us-they were once standard fare for Britons) but also simple. Henderson's signature dish is Roast Bone Marrow and Parsley Salad, which calls for marrowbone, parsley, shallots and capers, with a dressing of lemon juice and olive oil-that's all. The ingredient list for Duck Hearts on Toast is minimal: duck hearts, chicken stock, balsamic vinegar, salt, pepper, butter and toast. Many pages are devoted to preserving meats, including an intriguing recipe for dried salted pig's liver. Others include brine-cured pork belly, corned ox tongue, cured beef or venison, pickled herring and a variety of animal parts preserved in rendered fat. And the book contains other treasures: many recipes for game birds, rabbit, venison, crab, eel, mussels and salt cod; creative vegetable concoctions, wonderful soups and unusual salads. Henderson understands the value of stocks, makes pastry crust with suet and uses real butter and cream.

Fergus Henderson, the chef author of this book subtitled 'nose to tail eating' is a cult hero among foodies and among heroes of foodies such as Tony Bourdain, who writes the introduction to this new edition and Mario Batali, a major advocate himself of using the whole animal. For several reasons, this book is likely to have little to no value to the average person who cooks and who may refer to a cookbook now and then. The recipes commonly use ingredients that are simply unavailable outside better butcher shops and farmers' markets. The recipes also commonly use

techniques that are the antithesis of fast cooking and low fat cooking. There are some recipes that literally require up to two weeks to complete. The true audience for this book aside from culinary professionals are those who religiously watch Alton Brown's 'Good Eats', read John Thorne's books and newsletter as if they were gospels, and study books by Paul Bertolli, Eric Ripert, Judy Rodgers, and Jeremiah Tower for subtle new techniques to squeeze the last ounce of value from their primo materia. Just to be sure it is clear to you what this book is all about, its primary subject is preparing in a cuisine absolutely everything but the oink, as the saying goes, from a pig and other animals. To this end, the author presents us with recipes for pig's head, pig's jowls (Mario Batali's favorite guanciale), pig's ears, pig's tail, livers, hearts, tongues, and the most beloved stomach as used in preparing the old Scottish classic, haggis. If this were the limit of the author's novelty, there would probably be little interest in the book among chefs.

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