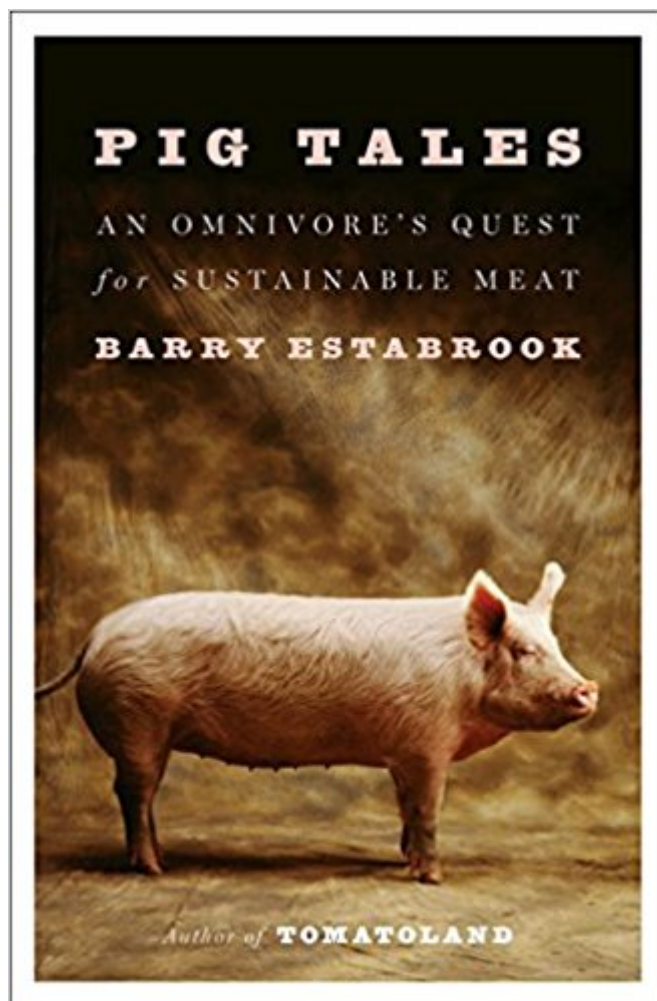


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# Pig Tales: An Omnivore's Quest For Sustainable Meat



## Synopsis

An eye-opening investigation of the commercial pork industry and an inspiring alternative to the way pigs are raised and consumed in America. Barry Estabrook, author of the New York Times bestseller *Tomatoland* and a writer of *“great skill and compassion”* (Eric Schlosser), now explores the dark side of the American pork industry. Drawing on his personal experiences raising pigs as well as his sharp investigative instincts, Estabrook covers the range of the human-porcine experience. He embarks on nocturnal feral pig hunts in Texas. He visits farmers who raise animals in vast confinement barns for Smithfield and Tyson, two of the country’s biggest pork producers. And he describes the threat of infectious disease and the possible contamination of our food supply. Through these stories shines Estabrook’s abiding love for these remarkable creatures. Pigs are social, self-aware, and playful, not to mention smart enough to master the typical house dog commands of “sit, stay, come” twice as fast as your average pooch. With the cognitive abilities of at least three-year-olds, they can even learn to operate a modified computer. Unfortunately for the pigs, they’re also delicious to eat. Estabrook shows how these creatures are all too often subjected to lives of suffering in confinement and squalor, sustained on a drug-laced diet just long enough to reach slaughter weight, then killed on mechanized disassembly lines. But it doesn’t have to be this way. *Pig Tales* presents a lively portrait of those farmers who are taking an alternative approach, like one Danish producer that has a far more eco-friendly and humane system of pork production, and new, small family farms with free-range heritage pigs raised on antibiotic-free diets. It is possible to raise pigs responsibly and respectfully in a way that is good for producers, consumers, and some of the top chefs in America. Provocative, witty, and deeply informed, *Pig Tales* is bound to spark conversation at dinner tables across America.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“A beautiful and clear-eyed examination of the world of pigs and pig farming. With his engaging prose and soulful, riveting stories, [Estabrook] illuminates the complexities of the pig industry and the desperate need for reform.” - Alice Waters, *Chez Panisse*

“Estabrook puts his substantial reporting, storytelling, and writing talents in the service of the pig. He documents the horrors perpetrated in America on this miracle creature, but he also describes the ways to break away from those horrors. . . . Pig Tales appalled me, terrified me, and then filled me with hope.” - Michael Ruhlman, author of *Charcuterie* and *Salumi*

“Estabrook tells two powerful stories here. The first is about the appalling ways in which Big Pig raises animals. . . . The second is about how skilled animal husbandry and respect for the intelligence of pigs produces . . . a far more satisfying life for farmers and pigs alike. Pig Tales is beautifully written. It is also deeply touching.” - Marion Nestle, professor of nutrition, food studies, and public health at New York University, and author of *Eat, Drink, Vote: An Illustrated Guide to Food Politics*

“Estabrook, a reporter of iron constitution and persistence, has dug deep into the truth about the American pork industry without losing his sense of humor and humanity. Gruesome on one hand; funny on the other.” - Christopher Kimball, *Wall Street Journal*

“Estabrook turns his keen journalistic eye to pig production . . . [and] provides balance in the engaging tales of farmers and processors who are thoughtful and eminently human. . . . [A] must-read.” - Cathy Barrow, author of *Mrs. Wheelbarrow's Kitchen*

“Before *Tomatoland*, I thought I knew about the American way of farming. Barry Estabrook proved that I was wrong, painting a devastating portrait of what was really taking place out in the fields. It changed the way I cook and eat. Pig Tales is even more illuminating, a window into the world of pigs and pig farmers that every American omnivore needs to read. You will never look at a piece of pork in quite the same way.” - Ruth Reichl, author of *Delicious!*

“Estabrook demonstrates his skill with words to tell compelling true stories|authoritative yet approachable.” - Steve Weinberg, *Seattle Times*

“Masterfully blends storytelling with succinct explanations of policy and science|a must-read.” - Jim Romanoff, *EatingWell*

“Cogent,

level-headed. — Nature “Excellent” — a more balanced and nuanced complement to muckraking works on similar subjects by Upton Sinclair (The Jungle) and, more recently, Eric Schlosser (Fast Food Nation). — Peter A. Coclanis, Raleigh News & Observer

A three-time James Beard Award winner, Barry Estabrook is a former contributing editor at Gourmet magazine and the author of Pig Tales and Tomatoland. He blogs at [politicsoftheplate.com](http://politicsoftheplate.com) and lives in Vermont.

A well-researched and well-written book that never was repetitive or boring, the way journalistic books can occasionally be. I appreciated the great lengths Mr. Estabrook took to conduct his research and present all the angles of the pig industry. The book flowed and while the uglier sides of the industry were presented, it wasn't done in a sensationalistic way - the facts were there and they aren't pretty. You can't put lipstick on a pig, right? I'm grateful to have read such an informational book that will ultimately help inform my decisions as a pig consumer moving forward. Which is, to say, I intend to support local pig farmers and avoid the industrial pork at all costs. It's better for all of us.

Well written, well researched, well told. This book has opened my eyes and touched my soul. I am grateful for Barry Estabrook's efforts to get this information to the public. I bought the book after hearing his interviews on public radio "Fresh Air" and "Science Friday." Miss Pig 890 will be with me for the time I have left on this planet.

This book is wonderfully organized, and a delightfully easy read. Although there is a wide expanse of information, from characteristics of pigs, to feral pig problems, to the workings (and large amounts of problems) of big farms and slaughterhouses, and finally towards an idyllic version of an alternative method--- the book is a quick read. With so many facts and characters all crammed into one book, it would be easy for Estabrook to create a tangled knot of a text. But it isn't. I'd recommend this book simply because you will learn a whole lot about an animal that is, excuse the pun, often left behind in the mud.

I picked this book to read as I searched for topics about which I knew little or nothing. Also I had just had a heart valve replaced with a pig valve, so in a real way, I was looking for more information about my donor. I enjoyed reading the book and learning more of some of the stories about which I had

read before.... about pig waste products getting into rivers in North Carolina during a hurricane flooding event and about hog farms in the midwest being sources of foul odors. But here was also a story of redemption, about farmers finding ways to raise pigs more humanely, about Demark farmers doing it humanely and at very little extra cost per "pork chop." As I watch earlier about the Chinese buying a huge ham producing company, I wondered, are we becoming the farm producing country for Asia? Lots of answers in this book and a good read to boot. Thanks Mr. Estabrook. After reading this one I bought another called Tomato! Nothing like learning more about our food sources.

Great overview of current pig industry. I like that it shows a viable alternative to what has become the industry standard. It changed the way I purchased meat. I want to support the people that choose responsible husbandry. Better for me, better for the planet. Although these types of meats are more expensive, the quality is far superior and my money supports a part of the economy that I want to foster and grow.

This is informative, well written and more than jaw dropping in some cases. Pigs are smart. Men are cruel masters sometimes and are compassionate caretakers at other times. My son is a Wine Country Chef. This was a present for him. I read the book first. The Chef was raising 2 piglets that would become part of the gourmet meals for events at Epicurean Escapes. We eat meat. We love our bacon. We loved the book and are compelled by it to pay more attention to the abuse of the land, the animals and the law that greedy agribusiness has foisted on ÃfÂçÃ â -Ã â the popu

An important expose on industrial hog farming brought to the level of ridiculousness. It follows a similar arc of his first book "Tomatoland" showing how "progress" is not good for the animals or people, or innocent bystanders involved and produces a product that fails to be good eats on many levels. It also presents a method of dialing back the drugs, the confinement, and other "necessary evils" to produce a better product at some added cost but with better results for all.

"Pig tales.." is must reading for anyone who cares about the meat they eat, the production of meat and its safety, and the agricultural process in the US.

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