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HOW TO USE MEAT FOR MOTIVATION AND MORE: THE STORY OF RYAN FARR



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By **Erik R. Trinidad** | October 23, 2012

## HOW TO USE MEAT FOR MOTIVATION AND MORE: THE STORY OF RYAN FARR

You may have already learned how to make the most of your meat, but have you had meat make the most of your life? That's the case for Ryan Farr, founder of **4505 Meats**, a socially responsible butchery based in San Francisco. As a former chef on the restaurant scene for 15 years, Farr began getting into meat culture — the sourcing of animals, butchery, and passing the knowledge on to others — when he realized that meat was about much more than just the preparation. Having complete control over the entire process, from sourcing to serving, became an important part of his philosophy when it came to the craft of butchery.

"I started talking to the farmers and really just loved what they're doing, and the passion that they had for the animals," Farr told me. "You really feel that we're part of the circle."

And so, he began his crusade of providing the best-quality meat he could, using animals from local farms in the Bay Area. Why does he do this? "We care," Farr simply puts it. "We care from start to finish — like the farmers do, and our customers do. We're providing for people. They trust us. And that's huge."

### If there's a will (and some pork skins), there's a way

You can't just jump out of the profitable fast lane of the restaurant scene and into this line of work without some sort of plan. Farr left that line of work and became involved with teaching in the CHEFS program, a nonprofit organization that helps addicts, parolees, and homeless people reenter society with a marketable knowledge of kitchen skills, including butchering meat.



But as enlightening as this all was to Farr, there was one problem: "It wasn't paying the bills whatsoever," he told me. Fortunately, he had some pig skins in his refrigerator and an idea: to puff them out and sell chicharones to local bars.

And so, fried pig skins supported him. His melt-in-your-mouth chicharones were a hit, for they weren't your generic pork rind; his fluffy, porky, salty treats were "everything you like in a pig" and "crispy clouds of pork lusciousness." With the support of his special pork rinds — along with friends and family — 4505 Meats was born. Who else could say his life changed because pig skins were in the fridge?

### Putting a neck on the line

Meat has been a part of Farr's past, but it's also very much a part of his present. At 4505 Meats, not only does he support the socially responsible ideas of locally sourcing meat, he also has a philosophy of using every part of an animal.

"So you don't waste anything," he explained to me. "There are so many options and possibilities. It's not just stopping at the rib eye." There's plenty of flavor to be had from animal parts you may think to throw out.

"Usually for me, the things that are most tasty are the ones that aren't the most popular. The beef tendon is so good [for soups and stocks]. And neck. I love lamb necks, pork necks, beef necks. There are a lot of small muscles in there, a lot of good fat," Farr said. "It's a smaller muscle; it's sweet and also a little tougher compared to a filet or a loin, so it's going to give you more bounce, more texture, so that's what I like to put in sausage."

Not bad advice for someone who says his spirit animal is the jackalope, "stuffed and mounted at a local dive bar near you." Farr has plenty more advice to give from his years of acquired wisdom working with meat. Thankfully, he has a book out, *Whole Beast Butchery*, which can inspire you to use meat in ways you may not have thought of. Who knows where your life may take you if you have some pig skins laying around in the fridge?



*Erik Trinidad is an author, writer, designer, food critic, world traveler, and all around "Freelance Renaissance Man," whose work can be seen on The Huffington Post, Food Network/Cooking Channel, and Discovery.com, as well as his own travel and food sites, TheGlobalTrip.com and FancyFastFood.com. Follow him on Twitter @theglobaltrip and @fancyfastfood; on facebook.com/theglobaltrip and facebook.com/fancyfastfood; youtube.com/theglobaltrip and youtube.com/fancyfastfood and "theglobaltrip" on Instagram.*

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