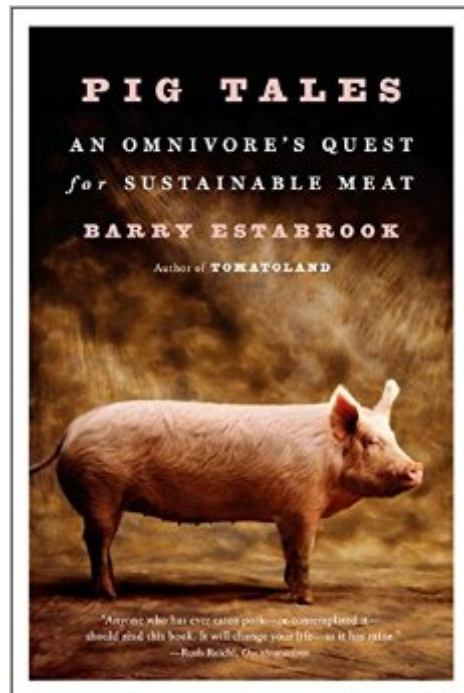


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# Pig Tales: An Omnivores Quest For Sustainable Meat



## Synopsis

• Illuminating, a window into the world of pigs and pig farmers that every American omnivore needs to read. • Ruth Reichl, author of *Delicious!* 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

I live in rural Iowa where the threat of having my own life and the life of our small community brought to ruin by the enormous amounts of dangerous pollution caused by these giant hog CAFOs is a real fear from day to day. Especially now that the Chinese market has opened up. So I've read a lot of books on this subject, looking for an understanding of why our local farmers want to do this to us and especially whether the secretive Big Hog industry is telling us the truth when it says that we have to put up with the gut wrenching ills it foists on us for our farmers to survive and for people to be fed. I've learned quite a lot from various authors over the last couple of years and was not sure I was ready for yet another view of the subject. But Barry's interview on NPR captivated me so I ordered *Pig Tales* and having now read it, I am glad I did. This is an extremely well-written and well-researched book. Barry Estabrook is an incredibly gifted story teller. He's taken an uncomfortable topic with many dimensions and woven a comprehensible web of very human stories that are not only wonderfully informative, but that also touch the heart. I hope this book gets read widely. As a society we need to re-think our approach to food if we wish to live truly well, peacefully, and sustainably upon this planet of finite physical resources. This is a great introduction to the need and possibilities for raising meat animals more humanely and healthfully.

In a fantastic, enthralling and wide-ranging piece of investigative journalism the author documents man's enigmatic relation to pigs. He starts off with a sensitive depiction of just how intelligent and caring pigs are and talks to a woman intimate with her pet for years. The moods and awareness are more than you would expect from a pet like a dog but exceed canines. He talks about the millions of feral pigs that are on the loose, particularly in Texas. He then moves on to the second section of the book where the totally unnecessary cruelty and torture of pigs as factory farm animals is detailed. After that stench, he goes to Denmark, a major industrial producer of pork, and witnesses how they have mastered the problems seen here at a price more competitive than ours! He talks about the huge environmental impact of hog farms in Iowa and how the pollution laws have been totally ignored by the counties north of Des Moines and the immense cost to citizens there to clean up their polluted drinking water. Law suits are underway as an attempt to remedy the situation. The combined air pollution, water pollution, worker injuries, medical risks and animal cruelty are reminiscent of a third-world industry and ironically controlling interest in this industry is

Chinese. Highly recommended.

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.

We are a small farm in MO that raises pigs on pasture. I'm very grateful to the author for writing this book. He spins a captivating tale about the world of pigs and pig farming that clarifies the true cost of cheap meat. Don't be afraid that it is going to much "gloom and doom" to read without getting depressed. Think of it more as a journey with the author through beauty and darkness, that leaves you with hope.

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.

Excellent narrative about the sad state of factory pork production in the USA. These intelligent animals deserve a lot better than the torture of living in contained filth their entire lives until slaughter. Europe does it a lot better; why can't we? There are better ways for a little more in the cost of pork.

If you follow the sorry state of the industrial food system, this book contains very few surprises or

new information. It is, however, a well-written, entry level exploration of the many outrageous and horrifying ways that our industrialized food and agriculture systems are broken. If you want to educate yourself about where your food comes from in order to make the kinds of personal decisions that will ultimately change changes, this book is a worthwhile read. If this book isn't enough to make you stop buying commodity supermarket beef and start shopping at reputable farmers markets, then you might as well go out, buy a big juicy McRib sandwich, inject yourself with some random pharmaceuticals, and then stick your head in the sand.

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