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Meat Eater: Adventures From The Life Of An American Hunter

MEAT EATER



STEVEN RINELLA



Synopsis

Steven Rinella grew up in Twin Lake, Michigan, the son of a hunter who taught his three sons to love the natural world the way he did. As a child, Rinella devoured stories of the American wilderness, especially the exploits of his hero, Daniel Boone. He began fishing at the age of three and shot his first squirrel at eight and his first deer at thirteen. He chose the colleges he went to by their proximity to good hunting ground, and he experimented with living solely off wild meat. As an adult, he feeds his family from the food he hunts. *Meat Eater* chronicles Rinella's lifelong relationship with nature and hunting through the lens of 10 hunts, beginning when he was an aspiring mountain man at age 10 and ending as a 37-year-old Brooklyn father who hunts in the remotest corners of North America. He tells of having a struggling career as a fur trapper just as fur prices were falling; of a dalliance with catch-and-release steelhead fishing; of canoeing in the Missouri Breaks in search of mule deer just as the Missouri River was freezing up one November; and of hunting the elusive Dall sheep in the glaciated mountains of Alaska. Through each story, Rinella grapples with themes such as the role of the hunter in shaping America, the vanishing frontier, the ethics of killing, the allure of hunting trophies, the responsibilities that human predators have to their prey, and the disappearance of the hunter himself as Americans lose their connection with the way their food finds its way to their tables. Hunting, he argues, is intimately connected with our humanity; assuming responsibility for acquiring the meat that we eat, rather than entrusting it to proxy executioners, processors, packagers, and distributors, is one of the most respectful and exhilarating things a meat eater can do. A thrilling storyteller with boundless interesting facts and historical information about the land, the natural world, and the history of hunting, Rinella also includes after each chapter a section of "Tasting Notes" that draws from his 30-plus years of eating and cooking wild game, both at home and over a campfire. In *Meat Eater* he paints a loving portrait of a way of life that is part of who we are as humans and as Americans.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Meat Eater does something simple, but amazing: it presents hunting, fishing, and trapping for what they really are: a primal connection to wild creatures through using their bodies to fulfill our most basic needs. Steven Rinella skipped the contorted, snobbish, and apologetic philosophical hogwash that has characterized generations of hunting literature. He skipped the self-indulgent glamor of hunting trophy kill tales. This is not hunting pornography; it's real stories about a real hunter pursuing animals for all the reasons that people actually do that. The book is composed of stories that illustrate these various motivations to hunt. As a child, it was because his dad and brothers did. In college, because he needed food. He went crazy for steelhead and bonefish fishing because it was so damn exciting. He hunted for adventure in the Missouri Breaks, and Dall sheep for the challenge. And always, it was for every one of those reasons--and to satisfy a deep, primal, desire that needs no explanation or apology. And yeah, to get meat. There's another thing about these stories--they're awesome. Really well-written, and full of subtle insight. I read the whole thing within 20 hours of getting the book in my hand. As an avid hunter who spends many winter nights reading about it, I felt, "finally, someone who thinks about hunting like I do." Rinella doesn't shy away from the moral and ethical questions that surround hunting, fishing, and trapping (hereafter I'll refer to them all as "hunting, because they are"). He explores them not in an abstract sense, but from the more credible point of view of his own personal experiences.

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