



Republic of Barbecue: Stories Beyond the Brisket (Bridwell Texas History Series)

Elizabeth S. D. Engelhardt

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Winner, Barbara Sudler Award, Colorado Historical Society, 2010

It's no overstatement to say that the state of Texas is a republic of barbecue. Whether it's brisket, sausage, ribs, or chicken, barbecue feeds friends while they catch up, soothes tensions at political events, fuels community festivals, sustains workers of all classes, celebrates brides and grooms, and even supports churches. Recognizing just how central barbecue is to Texas's cultural life, Elizabeth Engelhardt and a team of eleven graduate students from the University of Texas at Austin set out to discover and describe what barbecue has meant to Texans ever since they first smoked a beef brisket.

Republic of Barbecue presents a fascinating, multifaceted portrait of the world of barbecue in Central Texas. The authors look at everything from legendary barbecue joints in places such as Taylor and Lockhart to feedlots, ultra-modern sausage factories, and sustainable forests growing hardwoods for barbecue pits. They talk to pit masters and proprietors, who share the secrets of barbecue in their own words. Like side dishes to the first-person stories, short essays by the authors explore a myriad of barbecue's themes—food history, manliness and meat, technology, nostalgia, civil rights, small-town Texas identity, barbecue's connection to music, favorite drinks such as Big Red, Dr. Pepper, Shiner Bock, and Lone Star beer—to mention only a few. An ode to Texas barbecue in films, a celebration of sports and barbecue, and a pie chart of the desserts that accompany brisket all find homes in the sidebars of the book, while photographic portraits of people and places bring readers face-to-face with the culture of barbecue.

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