



A Cut Above

TAKE YOUR SUMMER GRILLING TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH HAND-SELECTED MEATS FROM DICKSON'S FARM STAND MARKET.

{ BY MICHAEL COLAMECO }

THE FOOD MEDIA tirelessly promote the latest high-end stainless-steel cooking gadgets, but any chef will tell you that the real secret of good cooking is to start with great ingredients. The most important thing is neither the pan nor the stove but what's in it.

Likewise, as summer approaches and the outdoor grilling season goes into full swing, the quality of the meat you use matters more than whether your grill is wood-fired, charcoal, or gas. Cheap, supermarket meats are an almost insurmountable handicap, and I avoid them assiduously. Instead, I buy a lot of my meat from Dickson's Farm Stand Market, a tiny two-year-old retail store located in New York City's Chelsea Market. Dickson's mission is a simple one: to support small, sustainable, local, organic New York State farms, and to

maintain a supply chain no longer than 400 miles, from store to farm.

All the beef sold at Dickson's comes from steer that have been pastured and either entirely grass fed or grass fed and grain finished. To achieve slaughter weight, grass-fed pastured cattle require a minimum of 24 months, which is 45 percent longer than their corn-fed, feed-lot counterparts. Their natural diet and pastured lifestyle yield remarkably rich, nuanced, delicious steaks high in Omega-3 oils and free of prophylactic antibiotics, residual pesticides, and added hormones. Likewise, the pork and lamb come from pasture-raised Heritage breeds that also benefit from a completely natural diet.

The animals are slaughtered at a USDA-inspected abattoir upstate, then shipped as whole, hanging carcasses to the store, where

they are broken down in full view of the customers into individual steaks, chops, miscellaneous cuts, and custom grinds for burgers, sausage, and specialty items. If you're looking for a great mixed grill, select an assortment of cuts. For the beefsteaks, I'd suggest tri-tips, flatirons, and a few strip loins or rib eyes. To this add some center-cut pork chops, a half-dozen custom house-ground 80/20 bacon burgers, and a dozen or so of their signature hot dogs, with some andouille, Spanish chorizo, and kielbasa to keep it interesting.

Finally, if they have in-house smoked, slow-roasted pulled pork on hand, be sure to get some. It's easy to reheat in a pan with a splash of their Carolina-style vinegar sauce, and you'll have a full-on, first-rate party going before you even light the grill. If a visit to Dickson's isn't possible, custom-selected grill kits can be shipped overnight, coast-to-coast. To order, call 212-242-2630.

New York City-based chef and media personality Michael Colameco is the author of *Mike Colameco's Food Lover's Guide to NYC* and hosts *Colameco's Food Show* on PBS and the nationally syndicated radio program *Weekend Food*.