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Bryan Schaaf:

Back on the Meat Speak Podcast, powered by the Certified Angus Beef brand. Bryan Schaaf. Joined here in studio, Chef Tony Biggs. How are you doing?

Tony Biggs:

Good. Good. How are you guys doing?

Bryan Schaaf:

Excellent.

Tony Biggs:

Good.

Bryan Schaaf:

And of course in between us, meat scientist Diana Clark. How are you?

Diana Clark:

I'm feeling a little salty today.

Bryan Schaaf:

You know, I happen to have the cure.

Diana Clark:

[crosstalk 00:00:27].

Bryan Schaaf:

I'll be here all week. I will be here all week. Before we tear into this, right, it is... We tend to put the miles on here, right? We get the opportunity to get around a little bit. Chef Tony, you had your first COTE experience recently, correct?

Tony Biggs:

Oh my, my. Wow. I was blown away. I went to Miami, and before I got onto the Norwegian Cruise Lines to do a wine dinner with Château Lafite Rothschild, I went to dinner at COTE Korean Steakhouse.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah.

Tony Biggs:

And I had the most incredible experience of my life. It was amazing.

Diana Clark:

I need to try it.

Tony Biggs:

You need to try it. Before I get into the food, it's got atmosphere. Okay? So you've got hip music playing and it's hip hop and it's Miami. So don't expect to go in to find the usual Korean culture suspects. This is very Americanized, but with a Korean flare. So that was first. Second, the service staff have spent months being trained on Korean cuisine, which you can tell by the delivery of the menu, the delivery of the service and their cooking techniques. They actually do the cooking tableside at your table. And it's amazing, right? But the best thing we had was the short rib that was marinated in kalbi dressing, which is a little bit of pear, honey, soy sauce, garlic, ginger.

Tony Biggs:

I mean, cross cut. So it kind of looks like an accordion type of a... If you can follow me there. They just put that on the hot grill on both sides and they cut it with some scissors. I know that seems strange, but in Korea, they do this. Right? That's part of the whole show. It was one of the best I've ever had, right? Unbelievable. And then, of course, the dessert was a miso caramel soft serve ice cream. Oh God,-

Diana Clark:

Still-

Tony Biggs:

Oh god, I had to ask for seconds.

Diana Clark:

I just always question that miso and caramel does not sound... What? It's like one of those things. Can't knock it until you try it.

Tony Biggs:

It's the umami flavor from the miso. So you've got that salty.

Diana Clark:

See, that's... Yeah.

Tony Biggs:

And you got that sweet of the caramel, and then you top it off with a little bit of soft serve. Like, come on!

Bryan Schaaf:

It's beautiful.

Tony Biggs:

Wow. Unbelievable. What an experience.

Bryan Schaaf:

Makes you happy. Makes you happy.

Tony Biggs:

Oh, unreal.

Bryan Schaaf:

David Shim, Simon Kim, I'm coming for you.

Tony Biggs:

David Shim, oh, you're my heroes.

Bryan Schaaf:

I need some cross cut short, diamond cut short ribs in my near future. That said, that's not what we're here to talk about today, but, I mean, COTE's pretty amazing.

Tony Biggs:

It's amazing.

Bryan Schaaf:

If you're in New York City, if you are in Miami, definitely worth checking out. They've done a really good job capturing what they do in New York City, in their Miami location.

Tony Biggs:

Thank you, Bryan, for the recommendation. Thank you.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. Very, very tasty. That said, I want everybody to set their time machines and we're going to travel back to 3000BC.

Diana Clark:

Too doo, too doo, too doo.

Bryan Schaaf:

Too doo... Right? Right? Chef Tony was not in culinary school.

Tony Biggs:

I wasn't. I wasn't even a thought.

Bryan Schaaf:

3000 BC, right, is a time that if you study history, if you are into meat... It's kind of funny. We have a lot of historical discussions in what we do here, and it's funny how food history and human history are closely aligned.

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

Obviously because food, it's a reason why we're humans. Right? I mean, there is a school of thought that says it was the moment that heat was applied to meat. That that meat became more nutrient rich, which is what allowed the human brain to grow to the size that it is today. It's what essentially made us human, right? But if you go back to 3000 BC is the first time that historians can find evidence that meat and fish were being preserved with oil and salt and all these different things. Right? You have to go a little closer to where we are now, only 200 BC. Still, Chef Tony was not in culinary school.

Tony Biggs:

I wasn't [crosstalk 00:04:52]-

Bryan Schaaf:

Still not in school. Still not there-

Tony Biggs:

No, no.

Bryan Schaaf:

... when salt curing became a thing. Right? And we fast forward to today's salt curing, 200 BC to today, not much has changed.

Diana Clark:

Still a thing.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. So we want to talk about the science of cured meats, and what is salumi, and what is charcuterie, and what are salamis, and all these very confusing things that we want to get into. But Diana, with your history and meat science, tell us, when you think about cured meats, I guess, what are you thinking about?

Diana Clark:

So originally, you think about the origin of why we even cured meats, why we heavily salted them, and it was to preserve it. We didn't have refrigeration to hold stuff at temperatures. So just packing things with salt was a way to maintain that shelf life. And that's honestly, then you think about how all the people crave that saltiness, that flavor, it's because we're used to that. We're used to having the salt in it. I mean, imagine how salty things were back then, just for preservation. But really what it's doing, it's driving out some of that moisture to help hold that shelf life. And you think about the curing process too. Well, that was before salt was actually purified. So that whole cure step, that pink cure, that nitrites and everything, that was honestly on accident. You had these salts that had nitrites in them, they were just naturally occurring.

Diana Clark:

And all of a sudden, they're realizing that it's changing the color of the meat. But then they also realized that has added benefits from a flavor standpoint. That has added benefits from preservation. So why

don't we isolate those and actually start utilizing them specifically and at specific amounts too? So it's neat to see, I feel like where it's come. But the fact that the art is still there. That we can sit down and make these salumis and meats. That they've done that for centuries and just sit down and enjoy them together, just like they did before.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. And we're not just talking beef here. We're talking fish, like Bonito flakes-

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

... is a great...

Diana Clark:

Yeah. I mean, pork too. Pork is heavily used in salumis. I mean, honestly, any meats you could do this with.

Bryan Schaaf:

Well, it surprised me that when you look it up, kind of what the definition is of salumis, it specifically calls out pork. So this is a very pork-centric thing, can be done with other things, but truly this goes back to pork. Which funny enough, there's a school of thought that says in biblical text. When St. Peter had his vision sent from the Lord that talked about they can kind of disregard a lot of those Jewish dietary laws, is when a lot of this came into being. So, I mean, we're not talking about something that is recent by any stretch and still very much the same. Does it make the meat scientist in you a little frustrated when you see, this is still a very, very heavily regulated process with health inspections and things like that, which are good, but at the same time, the safety of these has withstood the test of time.

Diana Clark:

I'd say there are times where you get frustrated just dealing... I'd say the paperwork part is hard. And also, there's definitely people that dive into this that think, "Well, everyone else did it before. It's not that big of a deal." Yeah. But also people died of silly things before too, but we've found vaccinations and everything like that to help prevent it. So really, it's a preventative measure to make sure that you are doing it properly. I believe in getting certifications on making sure you know what you're doing. I mean, even me personally, I would love to know more about sous vide, because I feel like there's so much there to do, to learn, but there's also a really food safety risk too. And I think a lot of people play with it, but don't know the kind of the true hurt that could happen.

Diana Clark:

So I don't mind the regulation on it, the headache of the regulation afterwards. The minute you start doing things, you have to make sure you're signing off on every thing. You have the SOPs and all that. I get it. It's annoying, but at the same time, it's for the betterment of you, for the betterment of whoever's going to eat that meat too.

Bryan Schaaf:

Well, I think about a conversation that a gentleman named Justin Sexton, who used to work for us. So Justin is one of those guys who is so incredibly intelligent. I can't imagine digging through his knowledge base. And we were talking about they would hang whole ham legs, right?

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

Something that has been done for centuries, if not longer.

Diana Clark:

It's still done, yeah.

Bryan Schaaf:

And historically, he said that they would intentionally hang the ham. It would go next to the Timothy, which is the type of Alfalfa, instead of... Well, it was a type of hay, instead of Alfalfa. And no explanation as to why, but there is some leeching of flavor, I assume.

Diana Clark:

I'm guessing between there. Like you think about certain processes that are just done and they realize, "Well, if we add the salt here, that's going to pull out some moisture here." So different flavor. And, "Oh, I really like that." Well, what did you do differently? And the amazing part is, it had to take so long for those to cure and dry out and everything. So they really had to pay attention to the details. I think a lot of people always think it's a happy accident and there might have been some of that, but I could more see it being, "Wow, that has a really funky flavor." "Oh well, that's because this was near it." "Why don't we try putting this near it, to see if we could pick up some of these flavors and aromas into that?" And started to play.

Diana Clark:

That's where that culinary side, that art came into it. It's beautiful. I mean, me just stopping and thinking about this. I was able to tour Volpi Foods based out of St. Louis. It is one of the most magical experiences. And they are so willing and welcome to people, sharing of recipes even, and everything. But they have these chambers still with wood in them, where they hang all of the Bresaola. And then like, you walk in there and you just think of how much meat has been hanging in here for years, and the family recipes that have been passed down. And that's, to me, where the art comes out of it even more. It's that magical experience. Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf:

Chef, it seems like right now, right, everything seems to run in phases. Everything runs in fads, right? Charcuterie boards are big, right? To the extent that you had one recently in the hospital, right?

Tony Biggs:

Wow, I was like... Okay, I'm like... Or should I mention the establishment's name?

Diana Clark:

Yeah, sure.

Bryan Schaaf:

No. We can leave it out.

Tony Biggs:

Okay. Well, anyway, I happened to be spent a couple of days in the hospital, but I'm here. Okay.

Diana Clark:

And he looks great, by the way.

Tony Biggs:

The food was so bad. I asked my wife to go to one of our favorite stores. Okay. And see if she could give a charcuterie board, which I've had in the past. And you say, "What? A charcuterie board?"

Diana Clark:

Literally.

Tony Biggs:

Well, this particular store carries a charcuterie board that looks like a real wooden board, but it's plastic and it's been painted or whatever. It's a plastic board with different containers, and it has all your favorites. It has the crackers. It has sliced cheese. It has two types of salumi. It has olives. And the worst thing I hate, and you all know this, is raisins. But they were chocolate covered. And they tasted pretty acceptable. And it was brought to me at the hospital bed. And all the nurses wanted a piece of me because they couldn't believe that somebody could make this charcuterie board. And for \$9, I mean, you can't really beat it.

Diana Clark:

Yeah, it's a great deal.

Tony Biggs:

It's amazing.

Diana Clark:

Pull back, bring back [crosstalk 00:13:12]-

Tony Biggs:

I was blown away. Right. All I needed was a little bit of French wine and I was all set, but they wouldn't do it. I said, "You could do it intravenous," but they refused.

Bryan Schaaf:

Well, it's funny. And I'm glad you used the term salumi, right, because we've talked there's a lot of food terms that sort of started as something and then they've come to be known as something else. And it's a

very confusing thing. And we tend to use the word salumi and charcuterie interchangeably, but that's not true. Right, Diana?

Diana Clark:

Yeah. That charcuterie, if I'm correct, is cooked and cooled sausages. So you think about lunch meats, that was more of your charcuterie boards. I could easily see that from a lunch standpoint, people having... A lot of times, you have platters of lunch meat. And so that's more what people were thinking about, making little sandwiches with crackers and cheese and you could put some toppings on there and you're good to go. Salumis are the dried cured. So that's when you salt them. You let them hang. You let the moisture cook out, not cook out, but the moisture get evaporated out. So that's the difference between the two of those. All the things that we make in-house, in our dry-age cooler, those would truly be salumis and not charcuterie items. However, they can be put on a charcuterie board. I know it's very confusing.

Bryan Schaaf:

This is where it starts to... Yeah, right?

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

Now that said, you say that, but you also mentioned there is a mortadella out there.

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

That would technically be a charcuterie, right?

Diana Clark:

It would be because it's like a baloney. So it's cooked and cooled. Slice that. You put that on the charcuterie.

Bryan Schaaf:

And it's a beef mortadella.

Diana Clark:

It is. Our great friends have decided to start making it for us. Sierra Meat's, they own Flocchini Provisions. And Flocchini is making some mortadella, Certified Angus Beef mortadella.

Bryan Schaaf:

Boom.

Diana Clark:

And it's pretty fantastic. They actually have the brisket fat chunks in there as well.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. Okay. Quick disclaimer here, right? So understand, like if you want to get this, right? This is beef mortadella that is made with Certified Angus Beef that's being made. So if you're in the industry, you can order this stuff from Flocchini. It's out there.

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

And it's delicious.

Tony Biggs:

It is delicious.

Diana Clark:

It's very good. Very good.

Bryan Schaaf:

But you mentioned chunks of brisket fat in there. When we are talking about a lot of these classical pig or hog recipes of salumis, right? And you look at your coppas and things like that. Those are made with hogs, right?

Diana Clark:

Yep.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's made with pork. When you try and replicate that in beef, you go with brisket fat.

Diana Clark:

Yeah. So you start to think about certain salumis in pork specifically, that they use whole muscle. And we struggle with that a little bit more in beef because the fat is different. So fat and pork is more unsaturated. So it's a softer fat, melts at lower temperature. Beef fat is more saturated in general. Now, brisket fat though is the most unsaturated fat in the animal when you start to look at it from a subprimal standpoint. The other cool part is the more marbling, and if you guys go back to the episode that we had in season two with Dr. Steve Smith from Texas A&M University, but the more marbling that that animal puts down, the more unsaturated fatty acid are going to be found throughout the entire carcass. So you have more higher amounts of that oleic fatty acid throughout the entire carcass.

Diana Clark:

So Certified Angus Beef animals are going to have more of that softer fat in general, just due to the marbling that they have in the animal itself. But we try to utilize still more of that brisket fat, because it has the most amount of that oleic acid on the animal. And then that's that softer fat that blends well,

better mouth feel when you're not cooking it. So it's not going to render out or anything like that. It's still those whole chunks that you're eating. So you want to have a smooth bite with it.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. Chef Tony, when we talk about beef alternatives to things that are classically made with pork. Right? Your prosciutto made now with brisket, initially made with culotte, is ridiculously mind-blowing. Talk to us about that process.

Tony Biggs:

Well, okay. Well, as everybody knows, the prosciutto is an Italian leg of lamb, or of pork, which has been cured in salt first. That gets rid of all the blood and the moisture in the leg. And then that's washed. And then it's seasoned. And each family has their own special seasoning. It's always secret and you can never get it out of them. And then it's hung for about 36 months until it's dry cured. Right? So being a classical trained chef, I've done gravlax over the years, which of course is salmon usually. And we packed that in salt and sugar to kind of cure it, right? But salmon is so delicate. It cures in a couple of days, right? So we took that same process where we use kosher salt and sugar, 50/50. And we mix that together with some different types of ground fruits, like pear, apple, orange. Any kind of fruits like that. And we just grind them up.

Tony Biggs:

So it's not brain surgery, we're not julienne. We put them in the grinder and we mix that with the salt and sugar, along with some toasted spices. So cinnamon stick, cardamon, star anis, black pepper corns, grind those up. And we mix that all together evenly. And then we take the brisket, and we took the point off. We Jaccard it. So Jaccard is a way of tenderizing on both sides. So what you're doing is you're getting your... You want to make sure all the salt and sugar and all your spices get through the brisket. We originally did this with a culotte, which we called [culuxe 00:19:25].

Diana Clark:

Oh my God.

Tony Biggs:

Oh, what a cool name, right?

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Tony Biggs:

And it was brilliant too.

Diana Clark:

It was.

Tony Biggs:

But there was a lot of more shrinkage than we wanted, right? So what we do with the brisket now, is we take that and we wrap that in cheese cloth. And then we put that in a Lexan pan, which is a Lexan pan is a very, very industrial plastic pan, which you can see through. And we just submerge this brisket in this salt and sugar mix for 35 days. Totally submerged. So no air bubbles, no nothing. No exposure to... I'm sorry. I left one thing out. So we have the pink salt. Okay? So we put about three ounces of the pink salt in there, and that gives it the color.

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Tony Biggs:

You were talking about the color originally, and that gives it the color of the beef. It doesn't turn gray when it comes out of the brine. Now you've got this reddish color that looks beautiful, right? Like a prosciutto, right? You're with me that far? Okay. So we've packed this in. We let it in our refrigerator. Let it go for 36 days. Take it out. We wash it off. You're going to have some liquid in the brine, which is from the sugar, the meat itself, the juices from the fruits. So don't be alarmed by that as long as everything is sealed, packed in. Take that, remove it, wash it off really well, the brisket. And then we put it in our dry-age cooler for about 14 days. Give it that little extra funky. Okay. Bryan, the funky music song. Right? And so after that, you just cut that, and you put this on the slicer paper thin. For Norwegian Cruise, we did amuse-bouche which is a one bite taste of something before your meal. And we served the brisket prosciutto and melon. And people went nuts.

Bryan Schaaf:

Classic. Yeah.

Tony Biggs:

And it was beef. It wasn't pork. And that's what we do here at Certified Angus Beef, along with you, Diana. Unbelievable. And we create some magical stuff. This was pretty magical.

Diana Clark:

It is pretty mind-blowing. And that's like the fruitiness in it, I think blew my mind. Because I really was like, "Are we really going to taste any of that?" Like, "Is that just extra? Do we really need to add that?" You take a bite, you could taste the fruity notes in it. It was pretty awesome.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. It's pretty mind-blowing.

Tony Biggs:

And the fat.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah.

Tony Biggs:

When Bryan was talking about the brisket fat, and you were too, that fat melts on your mouth.

Diana Clark:

It does.

Tony Biggs:

Just like it would on prosciutto ham, right?

Diana Clark:

It does.

Tony Biggs:

So when you taste the prosciutto ham on your charcuterie board from that store that I was talking about before, the prosciutto melts right on your tongue. And that's the way should be. It should melt. And so this brisket fat did the same of that.

Bryan Schaaf:

It's almost like stained glass, right? The moment it hits your warmth, it just... Mmm.

Tony Biggs:

Right.

Diana Clark:

Starts to sing a little bit, "Ah."

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. Tony, you'd mentioned it. Diane, you've mentioned it already. Nitrates, nitrites, right, gets thrown under the bus a lot. Do we have to be afraid of this?

Diana Clark:

No, not at all. They're in industry for a reason to help maintain shelf life, to help give you good color, to stop warmed over flavor. And they're highly regulated. I mean, truly when I worked at Sarah Lee, now owned by Tyson, but Hillshire Farm, we worked on lunch meats. The nitrates were under lock and key. I mean, to that extent. You had to weigh it out exactly the amount that you're putting in. People that are concerned about nitrates. Okay. Let's look at every 4th of July, there's a national hot dog eating contest. Do any of them even come close to any type of nitrite overeating, poison or anything? No. And they're eating many, many, many hot dogs.

Tony Biggs:

What's the record? What's the record of that?

Diana Clark:

I don't even remember. It blows my mind.

Bryan Schaaf:

Joey Chestnut, I think it was in the '60s. I think.

Diana Clark:

That's what I knew. It was like '60s to '70s. Somewhere... Like that, to me, is insane. But still, if they don't have anything to worry about, I think we are all in the clear. And just to clarify, I do understand just from a labeling standpoint of having that clean label and not having the nitrite on the packages. It says no nitrites added, or natural occurring nitrites. Now, just because there's none added doesn't mean that they're not adding celery powder or something that has those natural occurring nitrates in them, to create the same exact reaction. It just sounds better to the consumer, which I understand, because it can be a little bit scary.

Diana Clark:

I mean, you hear different things by who knows what? And so it's sometimes hard to digest. No pun intended. But there's a lot of science behind it to make sure that it's not going to harm you whatsoever. And it's been utilized for thousands and thousands of years. It just was naturally occurring in sea salts. And then we started to figure out exactly what it is and we started adding it back into the salumis itself, sausages and all that. Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf:

So you heard it here, all clear on nitrates.

Diana Clark:

Nitrates are safe.

Bryan Schaaf:

You're all good. You're all good. One of the things that we talked about a couple weeks ago, actually with our pal, Jeremy Umansky, in the episode we were up at Larder, talking about a lot of what they do. And of course, when you can't... You can't really talk about Jeremy Umansky without talking about Koji mold. And he does a two-week bresaola, which we've actually make... We make bresaola here as well. Eating it side by side, because his is inoculated with Koji, which is kind of an aging accelerant. And a traditionally made bresaola versus a two-week, they were fairly indistinguishable. But talk to us about bresaola. This is a beef salumi, right?

Diana Clark:

And that, to me, this is like the gateway drug into salumis. Like if you start doing this, then you're going to want to do other things. It's the easiest one to do. So this is what we do for ours. We take eye of round, trim it down completely. You remove any silver skin or membranes that you'll see. Just completely trim it down. Greatest part of eye of round is not an expensive cut. When you're working with Certified Angus Beef too, you get great marbling within that cut. So that's key, just to have some of that flavor added. But we just add salt, sugar, Juniper berries, and cure. And we let it sit in that for roughly 14 days, two weeks, to really... The goal is having that salt penetrate all the way down through to the center, because you want to cure the meat all the way through. Otherwise, you're going to have weird brown, gray spots in the middle, which you don't want. You want to have that bright red all the way through. And that's what the nitrates doing. It's making that bright red color.

Diana Clark:

It's locking in the color of the meat using the myoglobin with it. That's kind of what is actually occurring. But from there, pull it out. We rinse it all off and we put it in a beef bung, which is essentially the appendix of the beef animal. Stuff it into that. We tie it up and we do inoculate ours with penicillium nalgiovense, which is a mold that you can buy on sausagemaker.com, Bactoferm Mold-600, just to promote that healthy mold growth. We know the right mold on there. And we let it hang for about six months. So then, that's really all you have to do. It's honestly not that much work. It's more just sitting around waiting. We have some that are about to hit their prime here soon.

Bryan Schaaf:

Nice.

Diana Clark:

I know.

Bryan Schaaf:

And that mold, is that a necessary step or that's just a little extra something-something we do?

Diana Clark:

Yeah. You don't have to do it. In fact, on this last batch, I forgot to add it on there. And so hopefully, if your cooler is growing well enough that you shouldn't need it. But if you're starting a new cooler, that is a great... Actually, we've had quite a few people do that where they'll buy the mold. You just dilute it and you kind of bring it to life almost out of the freezer. Let it sit in some deionized water. And then you add that back to a liter of water. You can actually put it in a spray bottle and spray down your whole cooler with it. So it just [crosstalk 00:27:26]-

Bryan Schaaf:

Instant mold growth.

Diana Clark:

Yeah. It's going to be the right mold growth. One that's been utilized within industry for many years. So it's just, yeah, there's a lot of knowledge behind it.

Bryan Schaaf:

And mold does two things, right? There's a little bit of flavor that it adds, but it also prevents... Good molds prevent bad molds, right?

Diana Clark:

Yeah. They're competing. You're going to have a mold grow, so you might as well have one that you know, and be a good mold.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. Make sure it's a good, safe one.

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

Excellent. Excellent. All right. Let's talk about why you don't see a lot of ground beef charcuterie or beef salumi items out there on the market.

Diana Clark:

Yeah. There's not a lot of science behind it, and that's really the main reason why you have a lot of validity, there we go, validity studies within pork that have shown, "Okay, basically they look at, if we inoculate this with this bacteria, can it decrease it? Can it stop? Can it inhibit growth?" And so they've looked at all of those and they've gotten past. They haven't done that with beef in the model. There are some companies that do a 50/50 of pork and beef, and they have done some personal studies themselves through different universities to get that published. And so they're good to go. And they have those documents. But from an all beef standpoint, there's really not one. We started working with the USDA on one in 2016, but they have priorities and that fell short on the list. So I don't know where we're at there. If someone's listening from there, that'd be great to pick back up.

Bryan Schaaf:

That's right.

Diana Clark:

But-

Bryan Schaaf:

Give me call.

Diana Clark:

Yes. But I mean, there's certain things that you could look for to make sure... If you are doing it, check the pH. We have a pH meter that will check to make sure that it drops below... That ground beef, just making sure that it drops low enough. I think ours gets down to like, man, don't quote me on this, but around 4.9, 5.0. Just, you want to have more of an acidic pH in there to make sure things are killed off. And then their water activity is huge at the end of that drying process. Making sure your water activity is low enough, so nothing can grow.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah.

Diana Clark:

Yeah. So we have a water activity meter as well.

Bryan Schaaf:

Excellent. I would be remiss if I didn't bring it up talking about this stuff. One of my favorite beef centric salumis is, of course, Lardo. Lardo is typically pork fat, right? It's fat, right? And then it's sliced.

Diana Clark:

Sliced.

Bryan Schaaf:

And you put it on your tongue and you've just basically eaten a piece of fat. Now, it's been cured and hung. But again, our boys up at Larder were harvesting, when they were doing briskets for their pastrami, they would save the fat trim. And they would similarly hang it, cure it, hang it. And they called it [suedo 00:30:13]-

Diana Clark:

Oh, I love it.

Bryan Schaaf:

... because it's beef suet. And it's like Lardos. So they called it Suedo, and it was hung brisket fat. And it was just... You know the... They used to have those, like, Listerine had like the flavor strips that you put on your tongue.

Diana Clark:

[crosstalk 00:30:26]. Yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

And it would just melt away and all of a sudden... It was just like that, where this beautiful little thinly slice bit of brisket fat, just mm. It just, it makes [crosstalk 00:30:35] fantastic.

Diana Clark:

I like that.

Bryan Schaaf:

It's fantastic. Excellent. Guys, anything that we've missed about the world of charcuterie? The biggest thing, chef, when I think about in restaurants, this is not cheap if you're going to have this on your menu and you're not making it in-house. And I understand there are a lot of reasons why you wouldn't make it in-house. It's a pretty expensive thing to stock, right?

Tony Biggs:

It is. And what I've noticed about, I think there's been a huge outpour for charcuterie boards. I know my daughter is into it. And when she has guests over, she'll spend a lot of money like as Bryan is saying, and she'll build this masterpiece. Maybe it's because her father's a chef. I don't know. I'm just guessing.

Diana Clark:

Runs in her blood.

Tony Biggs:

Oh my gosh. She's got the things that really accompany a really nice charcuterie board, like fresh fruits and a fig jam and some bread sticks and cheese and all different types of stuff. That can run you some big bucks here, right?

Diana Clark:

There's companies now. One of the people that we worked with at the hotel for our wedding, she spun off from that industry. And now that's what she does is make charcuterie boards for people. Like, she delivers them to their house for occasions. And they're gorgeous, gorgeous giant boards, but that's all she does. She'll just go and buy meat, slice it, put it together in it.

Tony Biggs:

Well, I wonder if she's the one that made the one that had in the hospital. I mean, oh my gosh.

Diana Clark:

[crosstalk 00:32:10].

Tony Biggs:

[crosstalk 00:32:10] you see. All right, now, there you go. And now it's become so popular in this store that you cannot find them.

Diana Clark:

Seriously?

Tony Biggs:

You cannot find them anymore. So when you go, you go, "Where's the charcuterie board?" Right? And also, the chocolate lava cake they're always out of. So you know which store I'm talking about, fans out there. Right? But that is becoming a real fad. If you go on any of these social platforms, you see, you can find beautiful charcuterie boards all over the place.

Diana Clark:

I agree.

Tony Biggs:

I think people just love it. It's delicious. You've got sweet, salty.

Diana Clark:

Yes, like fruit.

Tony Biggs:

You could just pick through that, the whole... I find myself having to slap my own hand because I just eat the whole thing.

Diana Clark:

And honestly, it's like, it's not bad for you.

Tony Biggs:

Right.

Diana Clark:

It's good compliment.

Tony Biggs:

It's the Mediterranean diet, if you think about it. Right?

Diana Clark:

Yes. You're right.

Tony Biggs:

Cheese, grapes, beautiful pork items, and we're exploring beef now.

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Tony Biggs:

And we have a lot of nice beef things out there from Certified Angus beef.

Diana Clark:

I agree with that one.

Bryan Schaaf:

Amen. The one thing that I had not brought up yet, and shame on me because I've eaten enough of them since they've opened. There's a restaurant not far from here, actually, called Heart of Gold in Cleveland. Right? And one of the things they have... It's like a quick service. You walk up your order at the cash register and then you have a seat and they bring your food to you, but they've got a cooler and you can pull this out. In it is a... It's a homemade Lunchables kit.

Tony Biggs:

Yeah. I love it.

Bryan Schaaf:

And that they make in-house. They shrink-wrapped it themselves, but the meats, they are curing themselves. The cheeses are very, very special. All their house made pickles that they make right there. And it even has like a little like pseudo Ritz Cracker.

Diana Clark:

That is awesome.

Bryan Schaaf:

It's fantastic.

Tony Biggs:

Oh, that's a good idea.

Bryan Schaaf:

And it's great. And it's like 12 bucks and it's like, you go in and you get one of these and just like grab a beer and like-

Diana Clark:

See, that makes sense to me.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah.

Diana Clark:

When I was a kid, like I thought Lunchables were a coolest thing ever. And now being a parent, every time I think like, "Oh, that'd be so much fun." I'm like, I can make that in two seconds at home. It's literally baloney and Ritz Crackers. Like, what? Why have I... I blew my mind when I realized that one, right? But that makes sense. It's like that high end. You get the nostalgia of it, like when you are growing up. That I like that a lot.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. It's so good. So highly, highly, highly recommend some. On that note, guys, I believe we've got to put a bow on this bad boy. If this is your first time listening to the... What is this? Oh, it's the Meat Speak Podcast, powered by this Certified Angus Beef brand. Know that you can find us across all of your major podcasting platforms, Google Play, Apple, Spotify. If you can, head on over to the Apple Podcasts icon. It's a little purple guy on your phone. Leave us a star ranking. Leave us a review. You can also leave a review on the Spotify, which I don't play a whole lot on Spotify, but I know it's out there.

Diana Clark:

Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf:

It's a thing, right?

Diana Clark:

Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf:

So if you could help us out, it helps with our overall visibility. And honestly, it just helps us be seen a little bit more. So a lot of this content that we are putting out there is more widely available to the mass. So until next time, Chef Tony Biggs, meat scientist, Diana Clark. Thanks for coming into the studio, guys. I've missed you all.

This transcript was exported on Apr 22, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Tony Biggs:

I've missed you.

Diana Clark:

Yeah. It feels good in here.

Bryan Schaaf:

It's so good being back. So until next time. Thank you all for listening.