



Episode 219: James Barry on The Forgotten Superfood of Our Grandparents: Organ Meat

June 22, 2022

David Roberts (00:04):

All right. Hey everybody, it's David Roberts and you're listening to the Mara Labs podcast. And today, I have James Barry with me, and James is a recent friend I met at a conference in Cabo, and he was in the culinary field for over 16 years as a private chef and cooked for celebrities such as Tom Cruise, George Clooney, Mariska Hargitay and Gerard Butler. And so, he has most recently started a functional food product called Pluck, which is an organ based all-purpose seasoning. And when we sat next to each other at the conference, we started chatting and hit it off, just because I see the importance of organ meat. And so, I wanted to bring James on today just to get his perspective. And James, welcome.

James Barry (01:09):

Thanks so much for having me, David. It's a pleasure.

David Roberts (01:12):

So, James, I know a bit of the story, but just for the listeners, can you kind of share how you got into the organ meats?

James Barry (01:22):

Yeah. It's funny. Now, did you grow up eating organ meats? I don't remember if we talked about that.

David Roberts (01:27):

No, I remember that we had liver in the house, but it just stank. I mean, it was more of a negative thing than a positive thing. So, I don't [inaudible 00:01:42].

James Barry (01:42):

Were you like forced to eat it? Was there a lot of energy around?

David Roberts (01:42):

No.

James Barry (01:44):

Okay, so it was just in the house, but you didn't have to eat it.

David Roberts (01:47):

No, my dad liked onions and liver and I did not.

James Barry (01:53):

Yeah. And so most likely to this day, you probably don't cook it, right? You don't cook organ meat.

David Roberts (02:00):

Well, that's not where I go first. However, I typically buy a quarter of a cow, and then I get organs along with that, and bones to make broth and stuff like that. So, I'll get everything and then actually use everything.

James Barry (02:21):

Oh, that's spectacular. Well, then I want to ask you a little later what kind of stuff you're doing and with it, but that's brilliant, because that's one of the best ways to source it, is to just get a quarter cow. It's going to be the cheapest way to get some of these organ meats. So, that's really good. I did not grow up eating organ meats. I was like picky, picky, picky eater. I was no joke. Like when I would eat a hamburger, we'd go on trips and eat at McDonald's or something. They would always have to specially, we would specially order my hamburger because I needed it to be plain and McDonald's was efficiency. And so, they always had pre-made hamburgers and already had the ketchup and everything on it. And so, mine had to be plain. So it was always a special order, and then I would get it and it would just be a patty and a bun.

James Barry (03:08):

And I would pretend to eat it. So I would hold up to my mouth, but I'd just be pulling the patty out of it and then I'd crumple it up and throw it away. So I didn't even eat the bread. I was like paleo before paleo existed. Little did I know my pickiness was actually a movement.

David Roberts (03:26):

That's right. That's funny.

James Barry (03:29):

Yeah, but I was really picky. I didn't have my first taco till I was in college. If we went to a Mexican restaurant, I did a hamburger, a patty again and just picky, picky. But what's interesting though, is that I always loved cooking. So I'm a picky eater, but I love cooking. For me, cooking was like an expression of how I felt for people. So, I loved cooking for my parents. It was kind of like the way I would share my love for them.

James Barry (03:57):

And then, and then as I got older, I loved cooking from my girlfriends in high school. And I had a neighbor that was really into culinary food. Like, he was a bit of a foodie and they would make things from scratch. And so at one point, A, I was kind of influenced by him. But at that one point, I remember going to his house and specifically watching him, and learning from him. But yet again, never a focus on organ meats. It wasn't until I got to culinary school and we got introduced to nourishing traditions, the Weston A. Price Foundation cookbook by Sally Fallon. It wasn't until then that I actually started to get exposed to organ meats. But what's interesting. So I've been, as you read, I've been in the field for over 16 years.

James Barry (04:46):

So even after learning about organ meats through the Weston A. Price, I still didn't start eating them. So, I didn't actually get into organ meats until, I mean, honestly about four years ago. You know, not that long ago. And it solely came, it became a focus because as a chef, I've always been focused on wanting to support people's health, but doing it in a way where I'm getting nutrient dense foods into their diet, without them feeling deprived, or without there being a loss of flavor. So, a lot of my focus has always been on comfort foods because I'm like, "Well, comfort foods are what people gravitate towards." So if I can make comfort foods healthy and keep them delicious, then it's a win-win. Now you are eating these foods, but yet you're gaining health through it, opposed to losing health, which is currently the outcome of most comfort foods.

James Barry (05:46):

And so that's always been my focus, but then I applied that to, okay. Organ meats are the most nutrient dense foods on the earth, just hands down. And anyone that wants to test me on this can do a search, just do a search for most nutrient dense foods. And what's going to come up is usually a graph. There'll be lots of graphs that come up, and they'll be measuring different vitamins and minerals from different foods and they'll list. Usually a few foods they'll list, blueberries they'll list. Sometimes they'll list kale or spinach, they'll list beef, they'll list eggs, fish. And then inevitably, if it's a really good list, they'll also include beef liver. And so, every item has something that's checked off, some vitamin or mineral in it, right? Some vitamin or nutrient.

James Barry (06:43):

The only one that checks off every single box is beef liver. So, none of the other ones check off every box, but beef liver checks off every single box of whatever they're measuring of all the different ones. And the other power of it is, it's not just like, "Oh, it's a little bit, it's like 0.5 times more iron." No, no. It's like 17 times more iron, or seven times more potassium, whatever it is that is measuring. It's like the numbers are grossly different. And so, I was like, "Okay, this is a food that we need to be focusing on." Our ancestors focused on it. They ate it. And when I say ancestors, a lot of times when we say ancestors, we're talking about our paleolithic ancestors. I'm talking about our grandparents. You know what I mean?

James Barry (07:34):

I'm not talking that far back. And as you said, your dad, right? And for me, it was my mom. They grew up, depending on your age, most of our parents or grandparents grew up eating them. And then for some reason, it just stopped with our generation. It just stopped and it's like, I have theories as to why, but I do think it's interesting that okay, it's stopped and...

David Roberts (07:57):

Is it sourcing?

James Barry (07:59):

Well, I actually think it's potentially sourcing nowadays, or not nowadays, but originally, but I actually think it's economics. I think what was going on is that, so a lot of change started happening around World War II. So before World War II, organ meats were seen as a poor person's food. Really. And so they were already losing favor. World War II happened and the government was concerned there was going to be a meat shortage because so much of the beef, meat was getting shipped to the soldiers abroad. And so, they actually started a campaign that the federal government paid for to promote organ meats, because they were really hoping that would help to offset the muscle meat shortage.

James Barry (08:48):

And so, they kind of turned a whole generation back onto organ meats and they were now more in favor, but then you had the soldiers returning after World War II. And so now you had two people in the household making money, because while the soldiers were gone, a lot of the women started working who weren't working. So now you had two incomes coming in, you had more money coming into the household. And I think it was like, "Hey, we had more money. We deserve," you hear that word a lot when people start making money, "We deserve better cuts of meat or whatever it is, better lifestyle."

James Barry (09:23):

And so people were like, "Well, we're going to buy the more expensive cut." And so once again, organ meats then fell out of favor. And it's interesting because there's a couple hurdles around organ meats. At least the ones I identified are okay, there's an associated taste. People associate it as being icky. And what's fascinating about that, is that I will talk to people and say, "Okay, have you actually eaten it?" Do you know, for a fact that it tastes icky and they're like, "No, I've never had it." And I'm like, but you associate it as being icky. I find that very fascinating because that, it's almost like it's a cultural phenomenon of, we just think it's icky. So, that's fascinating. And then the other hurdle is that as you mentioned, potentially is sourcing. People don't know where to get it nowadays.

David Roberts (10:12):

And especially, I'll just jump in. Conventional cow livers are not what you want to be eating.

James Barry (10:21):

Yeah. But I'd love to dig into that a little bit, because I have what I think is a little skewed perspective on that. And so, I'd love to come back to that if you don't mind. Yeah. But so, you have the ick factor, you have the sourcing. I also believe we've lost the kind of art of cooking it that people, they're intimidated by organ meats. They don't know how to cook them. They think they cook differently than muscle meat. So they just are like, dumbfounded. Like, "I don't know what to do with this." And then the fourth is, I think there's a group of people that know they should be eating organ meat, and they're buying encapsulated organs, right? They're buying the supplement form, but then you forget to take it, just like any supplement or any, kind of pill that you take some days you're on top of it and some days you're not.

James Barry (11:12):

And so, I saw those as the hurdles. And that's kind of, so that mixed with it being the most nutrient dense food on the planet, that's kind of what was mixing in me as I came up with this idea for Pluck, because I have two kids, two young kids and I was like, "How do I get the most nutrient dense foods in the planet into them?" And really into myself, because I wasn't eating it. But getting over that hurdle of picky eating, or dealing with complaints like, "Ugh," like you complain in a sense you're positioning with your father, right? "It smelled gross. I didn't want to eat it." And luckily they didn't force you, but I really wanted to overcome that. And that's where that's ultimately where the idea for Pluck came from, was trying to achieve those hurdles.

David Roberts (12:03):

Well, I think I would say that you accomplished that. I think it was just last evening, my oldest son was on this ravenous, we had dinner and then he was still substantially hungry. And so, he made some mac and cheese, but the cheese in this organic mac and cheese had gone bad, it was powdered somehow, it still went bad. And so he ended up just...

James Barry (12:33):

I didn't know that was possible.

David Roberts (12:34):

I know, how the heck? So he put butter in the mac and cheese and was eating it. And so they grow micro-greens, which is another nutrient dense food. And so, I'm always kind of, for our dinners trying to figure out how to incorporate those. And so, I just went into the grow room and cut off some and threw it in their mac and cheese. And then I'm like, "You know what? It kind of smells good." I don't typically eat pasta, but I threw some micro greens in and like, "I'm going to throw some Pluck on there too." Some of the spice, and just a really very generous amount on there. And it was awesome. It was like, talking about tasty comfort food, mac and cheese, or at least pasta as a comfort food and yeah, it was one that I may repeat.

James Barry ([13:37](#)):

Nice. Yeah, I have to agree. Like I put it on every everything, you know? Honestly, everything. If we're doing popcorn for a movie night or something, it goes on the popcorn. My kids do have toast, it goes on the toast. Eggs, of course, fish. We've tried it on oysters one time. I mean, I have not found one thing it doesn't taste good with. And for the listeners, basically what Pluck is, as David mentions it's a seasoning, but what I've taken is five freeze dried, powdered organs. So I took liver, heart, kidney, spleen, and pancreas. And they're in the freeze dried form. It's the same actually, it's the same sourcing as the supplement companies use. I go to the exact same source, so it's no different, but what I'm doing is I'm combining spices and herbs to it, to offset that taste.

James Barry ([14:26](#)):

And so basically, I'm turning organ meats back into what I believe they are, which is a food. And by offsetting that taste, and I'm curious to hear what you think the flavor is that kind of perks things up, but I find it's umami. It's like it's basically, umami is the fifth taste. So we have bitter, sour, salty and sweet, and then they identified, I think it was in the '70s, a fifth taste in Japan, umami, and it's a unique taste. And what's interesting about umami is the best way to describe umami is like, it's savory.

David Roberts ([15:12](#)):

That's the word that comes to my mind. If you're going to press me, I was going to say savory.

James Barry ([15:13](#)):

Yeah, it's savory. That's kind of what it is. And soy sauce is umami, mushrooms are, umami is in lots of foods, but it's in organ meat. And what is fascinating about umami, it's also, I should say it's in MSG. That's also from Japan, right?

David Roberts ([15:32](#)):

I was going to say, that's how I've heard of the fifth taste is the MSG type thing.

James Barry ([15:40](#)):

Yeah. And so, it's also in that, and what is interesting is that you'll find a lot of packaged goods are adding MSG, and sometimes they're hiding it. You can't even tell, it's usually in like the yeast extracts or it's in flavoring. They hide it sometimes because they know if they show that there's MSG in it, people may not buy it. But the reason they're doing that is because umami, because it's a unique taste. It actually brightens the other four tastes. So, it makes food taste better. And then the other piece it does is, it triggers the addictive part in your brain. So it makes you want to eat more of that food. So, luckily that's in organ meats organically. It's just naturally in organ meats, and so Pluck gets the benefit from

that whole food source. But I personally find that kids love it, that people love it. And then, I love as a parent adding it to everything, whether it's pizzas or like you said, pasta meals.

David Roberts ([16:42](#)):

We add it to pizza.

James Barry ([16:43](#)):

Yeah. Pizza's so good. It makes me feel better as a parent to know, okay, even though we're eating, whatever it is we're eating, that I'm now getting these nutrients in my kids.

David Roberts ([16:56](#)):

Yeah. That's great. Yeah. And yeah, it's savory, it's tasty. I really like it. And like you said, knowing that it's actually healthy and nutrient dense is super important, especially when you're eating sort of a nutrient absent pizza. So I'll throw some again, micro-greens on the pizza, and the Pluck is the latest thing. And it tastes great. I mean, from my perspective, it's definitely a bonus. And so, going back to, I want to talk about just the sourcing and how you'd recommend folks sourcing organ meats, but also where you know, I would assume you source clean, but I don't know that for a fact. And then also, you were supposed to be here this weekend for a Weston A. Price conference, and just some of how he's one of John Gildea's heroes in science, and just share a little bit about what Weston A. Price talked about with organ meats.

James Barry ([18:18](#)):

Absolutely. So, sourcing, you shared a great resource for sourcing, which is getting a cow share. But when you're looking at sourcing, I think before you even figure out where to source is, as you mentioned, you want to focus on the quality of that. And I think where I differ potentially from how other people talk about it is, I do believe it's tiered. So, I believe that your first choice when you're sourcing is you want 100% grass fed, you want pastured cows or lamb. You know, we're talking about Pluck is beef organs, but truthfully you can get organs from any animal, right? You can get them from chickens. You can get them from sheep. You can get them from elk. I mean, you really can eat other animal organs and benefit. They're all going to have benefits to it.

James Barry ([19:12](#)):

It's the cow organs that we're mostly used to. They call them bovine in the supplement field, it's just what's plentiful. And really, there's two sources of them coming in the supplement arena. So, the one source is from New Zealand. And the other is from Argentina, and both are grass fed. I think in the industry, people will say that the New Zealand is higher quality, and that's where I source from. That's at least what I do. And like I said, it's the same sourcing as the supplement company. So, we're we're focusing on non GMO grasses, 100% grass fed. Now that's really important distinction for anyone out there listening, because all cattle are grass fed. They're all grass fed at first. It's what happens later that we're concerned about.

James Barry ([20:08](#)):

So, the conventional industry will then start pumping them full of grains and chemicals to support growth, because that's where they're going to get their money. But that's why if you see, it says 100% grass fed, that means it was grass. It started on grass, just like all cows, but it also was finished on grass. And then you want to go to, "Okay, is it GMO grasses? Is it organic?" So that's why I say it's good to then

find non-GMO. And if you're getting organic, 100% grass fed organic automatically means it's non GMO. So, those are kind of some of the terms you want to look for, pastured is another term. But this is what I was talking about earlier that I may differ for some people is, I still believe that eating organ meats is the priority.

James Barry ([21:00](#)):

So, if we were breaking it down into, is it better to eat organ meats or not eating organ meats? I would say it's better to eat organ meats. Is it better to get 100%, or conventional? Well, it's better to get 100%, but we have to go back to number one, which is, if you can't afford 100% grass fed, if you can't afford to eat that way, then I would say it's still better to get organ meats in your diet, than to only focus on 100% grass fed. And the reason I go there is because if you look around the world, like right now, one of the places you can go for sourcing is you can go to international markets. Other cultures are eating nose to tail. You know, you go to a Korean or an Asian market. I guarantee you're going to find parts of that animal you've never even seen before.

James Barry ([21:47](#)):

If you even travel and you go to those open markets, you're going to see parts of the animal. You're like, "What? I didn't even know that was possible to eat that." And it's not just animals. It's also of course fish and shellfish too. You'll just see things, and they even go into insects as well. Like you just see proteins that you don't see in the US. Yeah. And I would argue that most Japanese, many Asian people are healthier than Americans. I would argue that, you know what I mean? I think historically, they have been healthier, and really where they start to get unhealthy is when standard American food comes into their culture or into their country. And so that's why I kind of default to well, is it better to eat organs or to only focus on the sourcing?

James Barry ([22:37](#)):

And I say, if you can't find 100% grass fed, if you can't source it, but there's, let's say an Asian market in your neighborhood, go to the Asian market. It is going to be conventional, but I have to think it's going to be better for you than not eating them. And the same concept for me goes around fish. Remember when the mercury was the big focus and people almost in a sense, people were saying, "Oh, stop eating fish because of the mercury." It's like, I don't agree. Fish is so important for the diet. And so, I would say better to eat fish just less often, and not worry about the mercury than to not eat it at all. That's personally my opinion. And then, there's other things that you can focus on around that. You can focus on, make sure that your detoxification pathways are open, making sure that you are healthy in a way where any toxins that are coming into you that are leaving, because the truth is we're getting toxins left and right. Whether it's air, water, food. We're getting them, guaranteed.

David Roberts ([23:40](#)):

Yeah, and that's one of the main selling points for BrocElite is, it's the best natural molecule at turning on the phase two detox. And so yeah, I will say, having been in public health school, like at Hopkins, the official stance is no top feeders like sharks, swordfish, tuna, but everything else is fair game, and not farm raised, but your wild caught. So, I'll do a lot of sardines. That's sort of my go-to as far because they're not top, they're much lower on the food chain. And so, excuse me. So James, you're passionate about the organ meats, even if it's conventional. And is that because of the nutrient density?

James Barry ([24:54](#)):

Yeah. So, 92% of Americans are nutrient deficient. And that's the figure, I think it comes from 2014. So that's actually, I have to assume it's actually higher now. And of course, during COVID that came up a lot. Like particularly from holistic practitioners, they were all talking about, "Hey, make sure your vitamin D is higher" A lot of that nutrient deficiency is what was the hot topic. And what's interesting to me is that it's not an issue of food. Like, we're not a slim nation. You know what I mean? 73% of men, 63% of women are obese or overweight. So it's clearly, we're not nutrient deficient because we're not eating enough food. If anything, we're very calorie rich. So, that tells me it's the food choices.

James Barry ([25:51](#)):

So, where I go as a chef and someone has just been in the field for a long time, I go to, I always look at whole foods. I think products like yourself, like what you have, where you can kind of create something in a lab and it's working is unique. You know what I mean? I think that is in a sense, almost like a miracle in a sense, but I still always default to, let's try to get as much as we can from food. And then of course, find those quality products like yours, that then can supplement what we're not getting. But as much as I can, I always focus on whole foods because to me, whole foods are not a trend. There's no being in the field as long as I have, I feel like I've seen everything. I've worked with every kind of practitioner you can think of, from doctors to psychic nutritionists, no joke.

David Roberts ([26:52](#)):

Interesting.

James Barry ([26:53](#)):

People that are determining what you should be eating based on their psychic abilities. I've seen every diet. When I first came on the scene, the popular diet was the fat flush, and of course now we're at keto and then we saw the rebranding of vegan to be plant based. I mean, I just feel like so much of it gets lost in translation from marketing that there's always, people are always looking for that next thing. But in my mind, and this is where Weston A. Price comes in, we should always be trying to get that whole food, that real food as much as possible. And I think the beauty of Weston A. Price is that he traveled the world at a very unique time, when you could still find tribes and find cultures that hadn't been influenced by American, modern food, and he was able to chronicle what they were eating.

James Barry ([27:55](#)):

And what's interesting is that none of them were vegan. Most of them were eating some form of animal product. Most of them were eating nose to tail. And then, the Weston A. Price Foundation was built off of his learnings and his teachings. And then they took it even beyond that. So they even talked about, okay, if we are going to be eating grains, you should be soaking them. If you're eating nuts and seeds, you should be soaking. Like, they started talking more about proper preparation of these things. And that's kind of where my thought is. My thought goes around, even conventional meats is, ideally you want that properly treated, humanely treated, properly fed animal. You absolutely want that if you can get it.

James Barry ([28:42](#)):

But there are ways to take that conventional meat and help to kind of clean it up. Like you could soak it, for example, in lemon. Let's say you're getting an organ from a conventional source. You could soak it in lemon juice, or even apple cider vinegar. And that's going to help pull out some of the impurities. You

can technically cure things like in a way, our cultured product, which is going to help make it even easier for your body to digest like, what is that? Is it Gefilte fish?

David Roberts ([29:18](#)):

Gefilte fish, right.

James Barry ([29:18](#)):

Which is basically cured fish. I mean, that's kind of the principle around that, but you also want to think about when you're cooking these organs about what you're combining them with. And that's another thing that Weston A. Price is really great at is, they talk about how these different whole foods compliment each other. So for example, Sally Fallon talks a lot about when you're eating beef liver, beef liver is extremely high in vitamin A, and there is a myth that people think that you can get vitamin A toxicity if you get too much of it, but it's a myth because you can't.

James Barry ([29:55](#)):

Your body can process it when it's coming from a whole food. It's when it's coming from synthetic sources that's possible. But when it's coming from a whole food, your body can get rid of whatever it doesn't need, or keep whatever it needs. But one of the ways to make sure that your body is absorbing what it needs is to cook that liver in meat fat, or lard okay. Because the lard is high in vitamin D, the liver is high in vitamin A and the D supports the absorption of the A. So, there's little tidbits like that is really present in traditional cooking, that I just personally find fascinating. I love learning about that kind of stuff.

David Roberts ([30:35](#)):

Yeah. That I know we just did a podcast on megadosing with vitamin D based on a paper for autoimmune conditions. But part of that was also megadosing with vitamin A, as well, and the combo. And so Weston A. Price is one of the big names that we talk about around here. And when you mentioned nutrient deficiency, it made me think of the gentleman scientist, who is the most published scientist is Bruce Ames. Bruce Ames, one of his pupils was Dr. Rhonda Patrick, who talks a lot about sulforaphane. And so, his big claim to fame was how nutrient deficiency drives disease and drives aging. And so, incorporating organ meats into your diet can be one way to guard against disease and guard against aging. And James, one of the things you mentioned was, where do you start? What organs do you start with? Do you have an opinion on that?

James Barry ([31:54](#)):

Oh yeah, absolutely. So in terms of easing into organ meats, because we can talk all we want about it, but if you're not doing that healthy practice, then you're not going to get the benefits. And here's the thing about organ meat. So, let's say you are able to find 100% grass fed. Well, I guarantee getting the organs from that 100% grass fed animal are going to be cheaper than getting the muscle meats. So right away, when you're buying organ meats, you're going to see your grocery bill go down, not up. So you're going to see it go down.

James Barry ([32:33](#)):

And then the other thing is, it's more nutritious than the muscle meat. So, you're also getting more bang for your buck. You're getting more nutrition in that pound of organ meat than you are from that pound of muscle meat. So, that's one thing I want everyone to think about, when we're talking about organ

meats is that it's not more expensive. We're not talking about a health paradigm that's going to cost you more. It's going to cost you less. But one of the ways to ease into it is, I really look at Pluck as the gateway. It's the easiest way to start getting organ meats into your diet, and why that gateway is important is because we have to consider our palette. A lot of times, if you're not used to certain flavors, that's where some of that pickiness comes in and/or that icky association.

James Barry (33:18):

And so, we have to start changing your palette, and the palette is very much a living and breathing entity in its own right? It can shift and change. If we pull sugar out of your diet, for example, or things that convert quickly into sugar in your diet, you'll start to taste food differently. You'll start to, if we pull out processed foods, anything that has artificial flavors in it, you'll start to taste differently. So, there's really a lot of tricks that you can do to start supporting a healthier palette. But one is just start getting that umami, that kind of what Pluck provides, start getting that into your food. And now you're changing your palette. And also, what I do love about Pluck is that it's so easy. As you said, you just sprinkle it on like, you don't even need to know how to cook, right?

James Barry (34:05):

So right away, we're hitting all those barriers, no need to cook, no need to source, no need to deal with icky association. So, that's the gateway. Then I would say the next step, because I don't want you to stop there. I am not just about Pluck. I am about nose to tail eating. The next step would be to either buy a ground meat that already has the organ meats ground into it, and Force Of Nature makes a really good blend, and they call it an ancestral blend, and they do it for a few different animals. So you could do that. Or alternatively, you could source just a beef liver, or chicken livers. But beef liver is a little easier because it's bigger, but just source it. And when you source it, you're going to get it frozen. And then what I want you to do is keep it frozen, because what's intimidating about organ meat is when we defrost it.

James Barry (34:53):

So when it's frozen, it's just like a brick. It doesn't even register that it's an organ at this stage. It's when it's defrosted that now it's slimy. It's bloody. It's just, it's clearly a different texture than muscle meat. So, let's keep it frozen. Then when you're making your spaghetti sauce or your hamburgers, or your curry or whatever you're doing with ground meat or anything that has lots of flavor, I want you to then pull out that frozen liver and grate it into whatever it is you're doing and start small, you know? So, start with maybe just a tablespoon, and then as you do that and see that it doesn't change the flavor and doesn't change the texture, go to two table spoons. Just don't go over, if you have a pound of meat, don't go over 20 or 25%. And so that would be like a fourth of a cup. Don't go over a fourth of a cup, because that will start to change the texture and will start to change the taste, and we're trying to avoid that at this stage.

James Barry (35:47):

So, just grate it and then you put it right back in the freezer and then in no harm, no foul, you don't have to defrost it and feel overwhelmed with like, "What do I do with all this liver?" It's something you just do once a week, because we all eat some kind of ground meat probably once a week. So just do it once a week, and it doesn't have to just be beef too. I want to stress that, it could be ground turkey. It could be ground lamb. It doesn't matter. Whatever animal you're doing is fine.

James Barry (36:15):

Next step. Now that you've done the grated liver is to now incorporate organs. But one of the organs, that's kind of the mildest and closest to muscle meat is heart. And so, this time I want you to buy chicken hearts, because chicken hearts are crazy mild. I mean, they don't even have a strong taste at all. And then they take on the flavor, whatever the dish is. And this time, let's say you're doing a saute, a stir fry, whatever, anything like that. So, treat those little chicken hearts. You'll probably get about 10 to 15 in the pouch, the package you get. Don't use them all, just treat them like mushrooms. So when we're doing a stir fry, we might add three to four mushrooms, just add three to four hearts. But chop them up, just like you would a mushroom. Chop them up, dice them so they're small, and then add them in.

James Barry (37:10):

And once again, you're only adding two, three, four of those hearts. So, it's not going to dominate the dish at all. And if anything, they have such a mild taste. People will probably think they are mushrooms, to be honest. So now, you're incorporating mushrooms. I mean, I'm sorry, you're incorporating the heart, which is also the closest to a muscle meat. Next step is, now I want you to kind of put organ center stage, but we are going to choose a very specific organ that people won't know is an organ. So we're going to focus on the tongue, get a beef tongue, and beef tongues are intimidating at first. You're going to see them. They're going to look like a Gene Simmons from Kiss or something, and you got this big, long tongue. It's going to seem overwhelming because it's got this kind of skin or sheath over it.

James Barry (38:00):

Here's the deal. Once you actually cook it, you'll find it's not intimidating at all. So, just treat that tongue like you would any braised meat. So most, usually when we're making like Taco Tuesday or something, we're making tacos at home. We'll braise a meat. Sometimes people are doing ground meat, but let's just focus on braised meat. So, you're sticking them in a crock pot. You're sticking them in an instant pot, like a pressure cooker, or you're doing a slow cooker. And usually when you're braising that meat, if it's pork shoulder something, you'll add maybe a little tomato, you'll add some onions, you'll add some other celery, carrots, anything like that. And you'll then cook it in that pressure cooker, slow cooker. Now instead of the pork, you're just doing tongue, just stick the whole thing in there. And then after an hour and a half to three hours, depending on which device you're using, you're going to have a tongue.

James Barry (38:54):

That skin on that tongue is going to be already peeling off. So, just let it cool a little bit and peel it off with your hands or a knife. And then underneath is the tongue muscle, and that muscle is very stringy. It really does look like, I don't know, if you were making pulled pork. It kind of looks like that, but you can either fork it to string it or you can chop it up with your knife. And then what you do is, you stick it under the broiler and crisp it up just like you would carnitas, and it's amazing. Like, no one will know it's tongue. You can put it in your tacos, put all your toppings on there. It won't taste weird. It will still taste like beef. And then, it will taste like whatever other flavors you've added to the taco or the meal.

James Barry (39:44):

But it's one of those things it's just super fun, because you don't need to tell anyone it's tongue. But then when after they eat it, you can say, "Hey, you just ate tongue," and then they'll be blown away. You know? They'll just be like, "What?"

David Roberts (39:54):

Ew, yeah.

James Barry (39:56):

Tongue is already plentiful in the Mexican culture. Many authentic taco places, they'll have lengua on their menu and that's tongue. That's what it is. So that's now, kind of that phase where you're incorporating the organ. It's the main part of the meal, but no one knows it's an organ because it doesn't look like an organ. And so then, the next phase would be, okay, now let's put the organ center stage, let's not be afraid or shy about it. And then I would recommend doing like what your father did with the liver and onions, or making it a pate or kind of experimenting with other organs.

James Barry (40:33):

And that will kind of just ease you into it. And honestly, you don't have to do it all the time. Like, we don't eat organs like we do muscle meat. You can eat just one organ a week and that will give you plenty of nutrients. If you're using Pluck, I recommend you use it all the time, because it's microdosing. So the actual organ is always going to be more nutritious because it's 100% product, but Pluck is going to be microdosing plus accumulative, plus frequent use equals accumulative effects. So the more you use it, the more you get the microdosing, the more that adds up, and you're getting those nutrient benefits. But that takes me to wanting to learn a little bit more about, so you mentioned when you get your cow share that you're getting these organs, can you share, what organs are you getting in that cow share?

David Roberts (41:23):

Yeah. Heart, liver. I don't think we got any tongue. I will say it's interesting. I've had tongue, eating out twice and the first was at this French restaurant and it was probably one of the best meals I've ever had with a chef. And then the second was a sandwich, and it was perhaps the worst meal I've ever had. It was like, "Wow." I mean, I took one bite and I was like, "Okay." But yeah, I don't think... I've sort of been slowly eating up this cow share, and knowing a little bit about the organs, I have not done, I still have the liver in the freezer, but how I typically do muscle meat is just salt and pepper and saute it in coconut oil. I can control how it comes out a little bit better. And so, that's what I do with the heart.

James Barry (42:34):

And a tip towards cooking any of them is, if anyone's feeling kind of intimidated that the flavor might be too strong, just combine it with a meat that you do know you like. So for example, the tongue recently, I was cooking for, we had a party to celebrate my wife's birthday and we did a taco night, and we had all these people over. And so, I knew that a lot of them might be intimidated if I just served lengua, if I just served a tongue. So what I did was I braised a pork shoulder with the tongue, and then I combined the meats together. So neither one dominated.

James Barry (43:12):

If anything, they kind of just chill each other out in that sense. So you can always do stuff like that. And that's kind of where the grating of the liver into the ground meat comes from. The more you can just combine those organs with something else that you are familiar with, or the people you're cooking for are familiar with, no one will know. And the key is you just keep that ratio down. So I just find, don't go over 20, 25% and no one will know it's there.

David Roberts (43:42):

That's a great suggestion. And so for people who whose interests are piqued and who want to try Pluck, we'll have a link in the show notes about it. Any chance we could get a discount code to go on there, too?

James Barry ([44:05](#)):

Absolutely. What do you want it to be?

David Roberts ([44:08](#)):

We can talk about that later.

James Barry ([44:10](#)):

Okay. We'll figure it out.

David Roberts ([44:12](#)):

Yeah.

James Barry ([44:12](#)):

But absolutely, we'll get a 10% discount going.

David Roberts ([44:17](#)):

Sure. Yeah, that's great.

James Barry ([44:19](#)):

Just tell me what you want it to be, but yeah, absolutely. And then make sure, so we don't want you to be intimidated. Obviously, using Pluck is not intimidating at all because it's just like any seasoning, but in general, as I mentioned, we're not just about Pluck. We're about nose to tail eating. So, you can go to our website at EatPluck.com. We have a recipe section.

David Roberts ([44:42](#)):

Oh, great.

James Barry ([44:42](#)):

Where we have just tons of recipes on using Pluck, but even more importantly on just using other organs, like we have a recipe on there for beef heart jerky, and it's delicious.

David Roberts ([44:55](#)):

It sounds delicious.

James Barry ([44:56](#)):

It's a great way to make beef heart, because it lasts really long. It's dehydrated. So it's like, it's marinated. So you can create what flavors it has, but it's just such a great way to eat heart. I'm now much more of an organ eater. And if you had told me 10 years ago, "Oh, you're going to be eating beef heart jerky." I would've been like, "What? No way," but I love it. I love it now.

David Roberts (45:22):

That's great. And you make it yourself?

James Barry (45:24):

Yeah. I have a dehydrator, and I'll just make it. And most ovens nowadays will go low enough where you can do it in an oven.

David Roberts (45:31):

The oven, yeah.

James Barry (45:36):

But it's a great way. There's really only a couple ways of preserving nutrients in food. And so, the best is always going to be raw. That's going to be the most nutrient dense. If you ever are eating organs raw, just make sure they're frozen for at least 14 days. That is one way you can also do the livers is, they call them liver shots. So you can take the liver, let it defrost a little bit, but then chop it up into really like almost pill size pieces of liver and then freeze them on a sheet tray like that, put them in a bag, and then just pop them as you would a pill and just swallow it. And so you're not, of course getting the benefit of chewing it, but you don't get any flavor and your body will break it down because it's so small. And you'll reap the benefits, and just do a couple of those a day if you want to.

David Roberts (46:25):

Yeah, it's interesting. With my late wife having had breast cancer, one of the first things we did was look at this place in Mexico, called the Gerson Institute.

James Barry (46:37):

Yeah, sure.

David Roberts (46:38):

And one of they don't do it currently, because I think they have a sourcing issue, but they tried one of the original Gerson method was to take a calf liver and create a slurry, and just down it raw.

James Barry (46:57):

Yeah. David, honestly, so I've done lots of different diets over the years because a lot of times what I'd have to do is, I'd have to, because as a private chef, I'd have to understand the diet and not just understand on a theory level, but I have to understand, "Okay, what does it do the body?" But also, how do I make it taste good? So, I'd have to understand all these fads and diets on all these different levels, on a very deep level. And so I would always be the Guinea pig, and I would do them and I've done them all. I mean, I've done master cleanse. I've done the fat flush back in the day. But one of them I did was, I did raw primal.

David Roberts (47:35):

Whoa.

James Barry (47:35):

And so for 30 days, I ate meat raw. So raw primal is, it's anything raw, but I'm also eating meat. So, someone says they're just a raw eater, that could probably mean that they're vegan. That's probably vegan, sometimes it's vegetarian where they're eating raw cheese too. But if someone says raw primal, that means they're eating animal meat as well. And I got to tell you, that was the best I have ever felt in my life.

David Roberts (48:04):

Oh wow.

James Barry (48:05):

I felt so healthy. My poops were gorgeous. I didn't eat as much food. Like actually, my portions were smaller and I was completely satiated. But the reason why I'm still not eating that way is because it's not sustainable. You can't go out to eat, ever. You know what I mean? You can't. I mean, unless you're eating oysters and ceviche all the time, but not a lot of restaurants serve all those things, right? You can't have people over, because most people are not going to eat that way. It's like, it makes your life very tiny. And I just couldn't sustain it. But I will tell you hands down, it was the best I felt. The best I've ever felt on any diet.

David Roberts (48:47):

Well, that's good to know. And so yeah, if you are thinking of diving in and trying some organ meats, James just mentioned your website.

James Barry (49:02):

Yeah, EatPluck.com.

David Roberts (49:03):

EatPluck.com has numerous recipes. And then, as James has said, sort of the gateway to organ meats is the spice, which I can highly recommend. I use it frequently called Pluck, which he came up with. And so, again, we'll have a coupon code, a link in the show notes for those of you who are interested. But James, this has been super educational and fun to, I don't think I've ever talked this long about organ meat, even when we were in Cabo. So, thank you. Thank you for coming on, and thank you for being so educational.

James Barry (49:47):

Thanks for having me, and please everyone, as you try it, reach out to us. You can find us on social media, our social media handle is @EatPluck. We love hearing from people, let us know what you think of it, but also let us know how you're using it, because you're informing us of what's possible. And so, I appreciate that when people share.

David Roberts (50:05):

Well, next time I do the pasta micro-greens Pluck butter.

James Barry (50:10):

Yeah, take a photo.

David Roberts ([50:12](#)):

I'll take a picture for you.

James Barry ([50:14](#)):

And then tag us. Tag us on social media, @EatPluck, and we'll highlight you.

David Roberts ([50:18](#)):

Yeah. Awesome. Well James, thank you so much for joining us. And you've been listening to the Mara Labs podcast. We'll be back next week with another episode. Thanks so much. And, stop.