

# LARGE ANIMAL PARTIAL BUTCHERY AT HOME

ANDREA HUEHNERHOFF WITH ANCESTRAL KITCHEN PODCAST AND PIONEERING TODAY

You can break down an entire hog with a boning knife and a bone saw, but judiciously chosen and appropriate tools make a job enjoyable and easier, as well as saving time. The following are (many of? Most of? I think I got them all) the tools we use starting with the most crucial tools we began with, up to the more luxurious gadgets we enjoy today.

**Curved Boning Knife** <https://amzn.to/484jJq8>

**Straight Boning Knife** <https://amzn.to/3ZVy4mr>

**10" Breaking Knife** <https://amzn.to/3TXMu1x> (also my absolute favorite for slicing cured bacon)

**Honing Stick** for sharpening blades as you go

**Knife sharpening set** for sharpening blades before you begin

**A cleaver** would be great! I don't have one but I want one

**Bussing tubs** - we have about twelve large ones (like what you would clear a table with at a restaurant), and 4 to 5 each of three different sizes of smaller ones with lids. You can get lids for most any bussing tub size. We find these at restaurant supply stores. We use these for piling meat, cuts of meat, ground meat, mixing spices, mixing spices into meats, holding packages of meat to be carried out to the freezer, etc. *Note:* different styles of bussing tubs have different styles of handles - we have found a style that fits BARELY inside our outside refrigerator, which is handy. You might want to measure or test a tub or two before investing in a lot. I originally started buying these for canning - for washing and rinsing produce, filling with heavy jars to carry, etc.

**Waterproof aprons** - we have homemade ones

**Disposable Gloves** <https://amzn.to/3zIU7SV> We use these ones because they last a lot longer and tolerate more work before breaking

**Waxed Paper** (most restaurant supply stores carry these in giant rolls)

**Butchers Twine** if using paper to wrap <https://amzn.to/483H5vG>

Folding Tables

Sanitizing spray (we use **Thieves Cleaner from Young Living**)

**Meat hooks** for moving large pieces of meat <https://amzn.to/4gSWumR> Like hay hooks, but tiny!

**If Vacuum Sealing .... Vacuum Sealer** <https://amzn.to/4f1o3IZ> - we need heavy duty work, and this workhorse has stood up to our hundreds and hundreds of packages. It needs appropriate cool-down time after running a bunch of bags but it doesn't fry itself like cheaper kinds do. If you are packaging 500 lbs of meat, you need a tough sealer. I am pretty sure it was Kate Schat who recommended this vacuum sealer on her Instagram and she did not lead us astray!

**Vacuum Seal Bags and Dispenser** - <https://amzn.to/4f1o3IZ> this dispenser box is more expensive than just rolls, but for us it has been worth it to be able to reel off bags and have them all evenly cut (sometimes we mark or tape a spot on the box or table to roll the bag to, so we can roll a bunch consecutively the same size). Previously we cut bags with a ruler, a razor blade and a cutting board. This has been such a big time-saver, but not as expensive as pre-made bags, that it's worth it. Plus it helps to be able to reel off really big bags when you need to - have you ever packaged a beef spleen?! If you are getting the hide back, this **Fleshing Tool** <https://amzn.to/3YhDpTR> worked great; there are a variety of other tools you will need for tanning hides but that is a topic for another day.

**Meat Grinder** - we were fortunate to find a heavy-duty restaurant meat grinder, brand new, for just a few hundred bucks. There are lots of different meat grinders on the market. Ours is LEM brand, and the grinder you get will largely depend on how much you plan to be processing, personal preference, etc. [www.lemproducts.com](http://www.lemproducts.com)

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**AMAZING SHARPIES that write on wet/grease** - <https://amzn.to/47XRKrX> If you take ANYTHING away from this article, let it be THESE SHARPIES! I have gotten so enraged using regular Sharpies and trying to write on slightly greasy plastic bags or *ever so faintly damp* masking tape labels that I am here to save your soul from potential blasphemy with just twenty dollars, that's right folks just twenty dollars to save your soul. Get these Sharpies and make like Lot and don't look back.

We really enjoyed the **Bearded Butchers** YouTube videos, as well as purchased a few products from their website: <https://beardedbutchers.com/>

We also purchased a variety of items from **Waltons**, including different blades and funnels for our meat grinder, casings, spices, nets for roasts and more. <https://waltons.com/> What we don't have, but would like, is a **Roast Tyer** from them (Waltons, if you're reading this, please sponsor me!).

The majority of our seasonings, salts, spices and dried herbs that we didn't grow ourselves come from Azure Standard. **Melissa has a great post here talking about Azure**, as well as a code for 10% off your first order of \$50 or more. <https://melissaknorris.com/podcast/pantry-items-to-always-have-on-hand/>

Many an evening we have spent as a family watching wholesome videos of butchers breaking down enormous sides of meat. What a way to build family culture, amiright? We watched a TON of videos on YouTube in preparation for, and during the processing of animals. There is a lot of variation from animal to animal, so be prepared that it won't always look the exact same on your table as it does in the video. Many of the videos we watched over and over, and we would watch them during processing as well.

Treat your work days like a working bee - **you need to have lots of good food on hand!** Even when you have extra hands available to cook, for us the kitchen is usually dominated by bags of spices, totes of meat, giant kettles of broth and fat ... and the work crew gets hungry!

Melissa has [this awesome recipe for molasses cookies](#), which are my one weakness ... And yes, cookies are a necessary tool for butcher day, don't fight me on this. She also has [this recipe for a no-knead bread](#), which is my other one weakness - if you have a loaf of bread, it's perfect to go along with any soup you pulled from the freezer or dumped out of a jar you canned earlier that year (did I mention I'm a big fan of **Melissa's preserving book!?**).

Here is the episode where [Melissa and I talked about what a working bee is](#) (not the same as a worker bee, for all you beekeepers out there!). I have a few of my favorite make-ahead recipes in that episode, so you can have them on hand and ready to go before the work begins and the slabs of meat descend upon you.

I am sure I will wake up in the middle of the night tonight with something I wish I included in this article for you, but at least you have enough here to get started! Wishing you all the best on your adventurous journey into large animal butchery, meat processing and relationship building with your family because nothing tests your mettle and the stability of your familial ties quite like six hundred pounds of meat piled on the table and a clock ticking down the hours!