

Perfect Creamed Corn | Quick Skillet Suppers | Stone Fruit Desserts

82

Very Southern  
recipes and tips

Southern

CAST IRON®

GRITS-CRUSTED FRIED  
GREEN TOMATOES  
AND OKRA,  
page 89

SUMMER'S  
BEST FARM-FRESH  
COOKING

JULY/AUG 2018 VOLUME 4 ISSUE 4

\$12.99US \$15.99CAN

08>



DISPLAY UNTIL SEPTEMBER 10, 2018



# STEVE McHUGH CURED

San Antonio's king of charcuterie proves he's a cast iron aficionado

BY MARY-KATE TUETO



Steve McHugh cut his culinary teeth in some of the South's most prominent epicurean cities—and has been nominated for the James Beard Foundation Award for Best Chef: South three years in a row—but he hails from a bit farther north. A Midwesterner by birth, Steve, the owner and executive chef of San Antonio's Cured, grew up on a small dairy farm in Wisconsin with six brothers and two working parents.

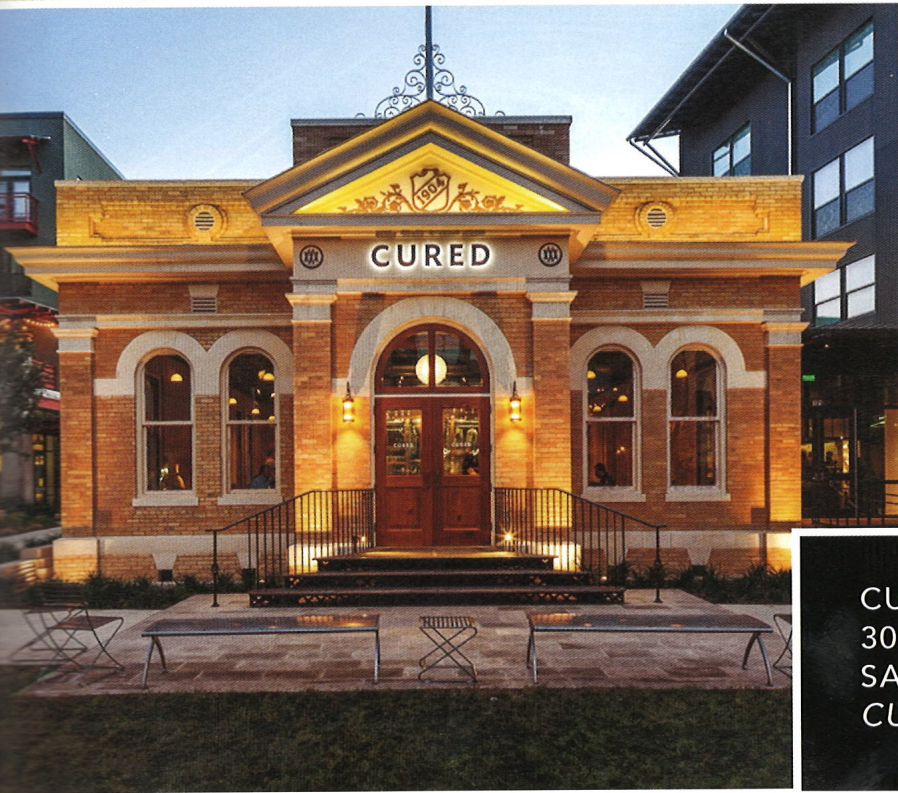
"My dad was a teacher and my mom was a doctor, so the farm wasn't their means for survival," Steve says. "Dad did most of the cooking since my mom was always on the go. At least 80 percent of the time, he used his big cast-iron skillet because he could do everything in that one pan. When you're cooking for seven boys, you just want to avoid creating extra dishes because you're already going to have a lot."

Armed with a hefty, vintage Griswold cast-iron skillet, Steve's father filled the bellies of his ever-hungry boys with everything from cornbread to cobbler to the pork they raised themselves. And while his father's cooking was always frugal, Steve credits it as a major influence in his culinary career.

"My dad was born in the '30s and didn't grow up with a lot of money," Steve says. "So when he was cooking, nothing went to waste. Everything had a purpose. So as a chef, especially now running a restaurant and having such thin margins, I've seen how important it is to utilize everything and minimize waste."

Whether it's turning greens from turnips into their own starring dish, or using every part of a butchered animal, Steve and his team at Cured make the most of every ingredient they bring in.





CURED  
306 PEARL PARKWAY, SUITE 101  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78215  
CUREDATPEARL.COM







**“TO A BUSINESS OWNER, THESE PANS ARE WONDERFUL. THEY ARE RELIABLE, AND THEY LAST FOREVER.”**—Chef Steve McHugh, Cured

Specializing in curing meats, pickling vegetables, and even creating vinegars and cocktail bitters, Steve’s approach to creating his menu is not only sustainable, it’s also packed with Southern flavor that is often easily lost in pre-prepared or mass-produced shortcuts used in many commercial kitchens. Everything he serves is handcrafted, composed of only the purest local ingredients, and cooked with the best tools. And for Steve, both at home and in the kitchen at work, that means almost everything is cooked in cast iron.

“When we first opened the restaurant, I bought all these stainless steel pans,” he recalls. “But after only a month or two, I just couldn’t stand them anymore. Stainless steel doesn’t distribute heat the same, it doesn’t cook the food the same, and the food doesn’t taste as good as when it’s cooked in cast iron.”

Steve purged the restaurant’s kitchen of stainless steel pans and replaced them with an army of cast-iron pans of all sizes. From searing steaks and pork chops for each order to roasting vegetables and bone marrow, the various pans prove their worth every night at dinner service.

“To a business owner, these pans are wonderful,” Steve says. “They are reliable, and they last forever. They don’t dent, they clean easy. When we cook our pork chop in cast iron, everyone wants to know where it came from. While we source good pork from good farmers, I think a lot of that flavor is from the cooking process.”

And that cooking process is just as important to Steve at home. He and his wife, Sylvia, use cast iron for most things they cook, from a hearty breakfast of bacon, eggs, and potatoes—all cooked in one of Steve’s largest skillets—to his perfectly crispy fried chicken.

“I try to fry my chicken around 300 degrees, which is kind of low and slow for frying,” he explains. “Temperature is so key for keeping it juicy, and cast iron helps keep your oil temperature regulated.”

And from newer makers like Butter Pat Industries and Smithey Ironware to coveted vintage brands like Griswold and Wagner, Steve has the beginnings of quite the cast-iron collection growing in his cupboard.

“I don’t think I’m at the ‘geek stage’ quite yet, but I’m probably getting there,” he jokes. Like his father and so many Southerners (native or transplant) before him, Steve has discovered the allure of a well-seasoned skillet and is resolved to share it with the world.





# 8

## MORE PLACES TO EAT IN SAN ANTONIO

AFTER YOU TRY CURED, CHECK OUT SOME OF CHEF STEVE MCHUGH'S FAVORITE SPOTS WHILE YOU'RE IN TOWN.



### GARCIA'S MEXICAN FOOD

"A great place for lunch, this mid-city Tex-Mex joint is one of my favorite places to eat in the whole city. Try their outstanding brisket—it's cooked in a pit right outside the restaurant." (210) 735-4525

### LA GLORIA

"Also near the Pearl, La Gloria, a restaurant by my dear friend Johnny Hernandez, serves incredible Mexican street food. With a menu that explores the many regions of Mexico, this is a must-visit for anyone looking for authentic Mexican cuisine. There's something for everyone."

[chefjohnnyhernandez.com](http://chefjohnnyhernandez.com)

### BAKERY LORRAINE

"Our neighbor at the Pearl Brewery, Bakery Lorraine is a great place for lunch or breakfast. The Grilled Cauliflower sandwich and Ham & Cheese with honey comb are some of my favorites, but their macarons are what bring me back for more. They're truly some of the best I've ever had."

[bakerylorraine.com](http://bakerylorraine.com)



### THE ESQUIRE TAVERN

"It's off the beaten path downtown and typically regarded as a drinking establishment, but my wife and I usually go here for lunch because they have a full menu and kitchen, and do an excellent job. They have awesome cocktails and a great local beer selection." [esquiretaVERN-sa.com](http://esquiretaVERN-sa.com)

### THE GRANARY

"Barbecue and beer—it doesn't get any better than that. Stop by The Granary on Tuesday for an unforgettable Pastrami Rib special." [thegranarysa.com](http://thegranarysa.com)

### BARBARO

"Barbaro is one of my go-tos. My wife and I love their pizza—I always get the Clams Casino Pizza. The cocktails are amazing, too." [barbarosanantonio.com](http://barbarosanantonio.com)



### LOCAL COFFEE

"Right next door to Cured, it's my favorite coffee spot in town. Rock solid coffee drinks with no gimmicks." [localcoffee.com](http://localcoffee.com)

### BIRD BAKERY

"If you have a sweet tooth, check out the Bird Bakery for their many delicious cupcakes." [birdbakery.com](http://birdbakery.com)





## CAST IRON FRIED CHICKEN

Recipe courtesy of Steve McHugh, Chef/Owner, Cured, San Antonio, Texas

Makes 6 servings

Steve's "low and slow" method of skillet-frying chicken yields the crispiest possible crust.

- 2 (2½-pound) whole chickens, each cut into 8 to 10 pieces
- 3 tablespoons kosher salt
- 6 cups whole buttermilk
- 7 tablespoons Crystal hot sauce

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 4 teaspoons ground red pepper
- 2 teaspoons celery salt
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 3 tablespoons bacon drippings
- Peanut oil, for frying

**FIRST** Sprinkle chicken with salt, and cover with buttermilk and hot sauce. Refrigerate for at least 12 hours or up to 24 hours.

**NEXT** In a large bowl, combine flour, red pepper, celery salt, garlic powder, and onion powder.

**NEXT** Place bacon drippings in a deep-sided 12-inch cast-iron skillet. Add oil to a depth of at least 3 inches, and heat over medium heat until a deep-fry thermometer registers 300°.

**LAST** Remove chicken from marinade, and dredge in flour mixture, one piece at a time. Place chicken, skin side down, in hot oil. Adjust heat to maintain 300°. Fry for 8 to 15 minutes, depending on cuts. For dark meat, internal temperature should be 160°, and for white meat, internal temperature should be 170°. Let drain on a wire rack for 5 minutes before serving. ●