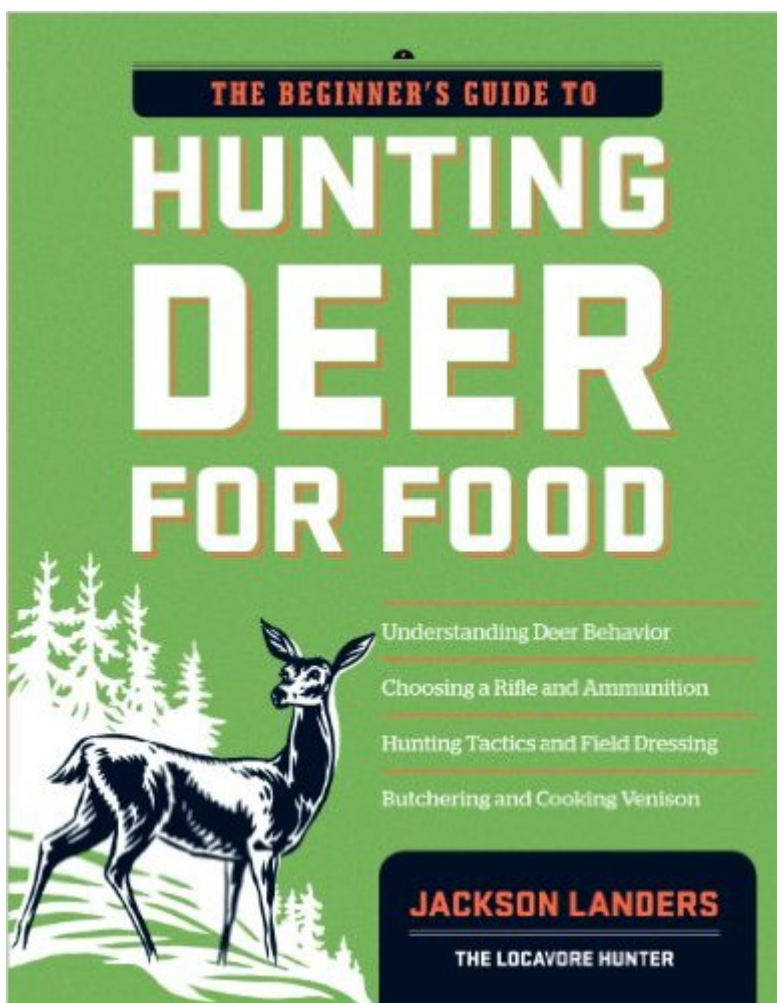


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# The Beginner's Guide To Hunting Deer For Food (Beginner's Guide To... (Storey))



## Synopsis

Hunting deer is the most inexpensive and environmentally friendly way to acquire organic, grass-fed meat. In this thorough primer, perfect for those who've never hunted before, Jackson Landers explains how to supplement your food supply with venison taken near your home. From choosing the correct rifle and ammunition to field dressing, butchering, and proper safety measures, Landers takes you through every step of the process and encourages a gentle, practical approach to the psychology and politics of hunting.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For a novice hunter, this book will serve as a pretty good introduction to the basics of deer hunting and understanding their behavior. From what I've read about Mr. Landers' locavore deer hunting class, this seems to be a written version of that class -- heavy on the evolution, physiology, psychology, and behavior of deer, with some of his own experiences, which are somewhat helpful. The first three chapters are dedicated to understanding deer, their anatomy and biology, and deer evolution. The next few are on possible weapons and tactics for hunting, then on where to aim. The last are devoted to the kill and post-kill, including field dressing, butchering, and cooking your kill. As far as some of the other items the book promises, it under-delivers. Specifically, you won't find specific information about "learning your local regulations" or "finding good places to hunt," other than advice to check your state's rules and regulations, then check out public parks, wildlife refuges, military bases, etc. for public hunting. Granted, the laws vary from state to state (including which

weapons are permitted and when), but for a book that promises this, I think a few paragraphs for each state would have been helpful -- even if it was as an appendix. Also, I think a few reviews (or recommendations) of specific guns or bows would have been helpful for a new hunter, rather than descriptions of the various kinds of weaponry that could be used in deer hunting. Mr. Landers does offer a pretty good description of how to field dress a deer, but I think it would have been better to have this section equipped with step-by-step photographs, rather than the occasional drawing. In fact, there are only two drawings accompanying the field dress section: one showing where incisions should be made, the other showing where to cut around the deer's colon. There's a series of three drawings accompanying the butchering chapter, which are decent, but again -- you'll probably find yourself Googling actual photographs, or buying another book with more specifics on how to butcher your deer. I've seen better step-by-step drawings in free printouts that some states offer, so I was pretty disappointed that more detail wasn't shown to this section. After all, once you get past the reality of taking an animal's life, I think the biggest setback a potential hunter has is the difficult task of butchering his prey. Lastly, as far as recipes, I only counted nine. For a book dedicated to "hunting deer for food," I was expecting there'd be a bit more than that. Plus, he confesses that he doesn't care much for offal, so no recipes are dedicated to cooking deer organ meat -- which, in my opinion, should have been included, regardless of his own preferences. Chef Fergus Henderson published a few good venison organ meat recipes in *Field & Stream* in 2004 (Google "adventures in venison") for venison heart, liver, and kidneys, so check that out if you'd rather not waste these tasty viscera. Bottom line: if you're looking for some background on the species, and some introductory material on deer behavior, this book will serve as an excellent resource for that, but for more recipes, regulations, and hunting locales (which the book promises), you'll need to find a secondary source. Fortunately these secondary sources should be easy to find online for free, so you'll still probably consider the \$11 or so you spent on the book money well spent.

This book is an *excellent* beginner's guide to hunting deer. If you are not a beginner (i.e. if you've been hunting before or shot a deer) this book is not for you. If you've read the *Omnivore's Dilemma* and are interested in hunting and how to hunt, buy this book. If you want to be more responsible for your food and the way it reaches your table, buy this book. If you own a bunch of property and have considered harvesting some of the deer on your land or your friend's land, buy this book. The only problem with the book is that I think the audience it will reach best will have trouble finding it. One of the other reviews talks about how her husband bought the book but *she* a non-hunter ended up

reading it. That's what this book does. It takes you from someone who never hunted and is curious about hunting and shows you the path. It won't tell you which gun to buy, it will tell you to go to a hunter safety course. It won't detail how to cut up a deer (it does at a high level) because most likely you'll want to do some more research when you get to that point. There are so many steps you have to take before you can successfully hunt (safety course, license, how to shoot, finding land, buying gear) and this is one of the tools you will want in your kit as you start out on that journey.

Mr. Landers does a fine job here of creating a guide for a beginning deer hunter, or someone who is considering the prospect but hasn't committed to it yet. His true strength is that this book is equally aimed at someone who is comfortable with shooting (but not hunting) and someone who has never fired a gun before. While I believe some of his sections are superfluous (the evolution of deer over the past three million years, for example), others are well written and thoughtful. I believe his sections on rifle and bullet selection, as well as deer behavior are the shining stars in this work. While I disagreed with the author on several topics (I do not believe semiautomatic rifles are unreliable, if well cared for), for a person who is unfamiliar even with firearms, this is probably a good starting point. I wish that the butchering and field cleaning sections had more illustrations, or better yet pictures. This is probably the most daunting part of hunting for beginners, and it could have been better presented. I also wish Mr. Landers did more to stress the consumption of offal. He says, and I'm paraphrasing, that he's all for eating the offal, as long as it isn't him doing the eating. I think this is a selfish attitude, and as the author of a book that is introducing so many new hunters to the topic, would've been better kept to himself. On this topic, Hank Shaw does a much better job within *Hunt, Gather, Cook: Finding the Forgotten Feast*, and he should be consulted for recipes as well as ethical hunting advice. Lastly, I believe Mr. Landers does a very nice job of addressing the psychological aspects of hunting, and killing, so that a beginner will be as prepared as possible for the emotions they will surely face when they take their first life. If I was going to take a new hunter into the field with me for the first time, I would insist that they read this book first, but then I would talk to them to straighten up the few things I believe Mr. Landers got wrong.

This book is a great primer for the novice hunter. It provides a consolidated source for information you'd have to glean from many other sources, and takes the mystery out of the whole endeavor. Landers discusses the ethics of hunting in a realistic and sensitive manner. He also provides a fresh take on hunting from a local food perspective, which makes the subject matter far more accessible to those like me with zilch background knowledge or experience.

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