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DAVID HOPPE | PHOTOGRAPHY BY KRISTIN HESS



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FOOD *for*
THOUGHT
an

INDIANA
HARVEST

DAVID HOPPE | PHOTOGRAPHY BY KRISTIN HESS

FOREWORD

There is a food renaissance taking place in Indiana. It's happening in urban gardens and on large-scale farms; in laboratories and in food pantries; in upscale restaurants and in food trucks.

And it's happening because of people like you. Your hunger to support Indiana-grown products and creative, locally owned restaurants has helped contribute to this regeneration.

In early 2010, Indiana Humanities set out to better understand that hunger through Food for Thought, a two-year program designed to help Hoosiers think, read, and talk about food. We asked Hoosiers to share their stories, recipes, and traditions. We encouraged them to try new flavors, venture into new territories, and learn about other cultures. And we asked

them to sit down, break bread, and chat—or, as we so often said, to “chew on this.”

The people of Indiana didn't disappoint us.

As we crisscrossed the state with a traveling exhibition and a variety of public programs designed to entice people to talk about food, we met Hoosiers eager to dish out stories about what food means to them. As we chatted at county fairs, city celebrations, farmers markets, and local eateries, we noted the pride they take in family favorites and community traditions. As we met in diners, kitchens, coffee shops, and community centers, we heard delight in their voices as they remembered special treats or familiar flavors. As we shared breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and desserts—there was *always* dessert—we savored the tales they told

about a revered restaurant, a relative's beloved recipe, a treasured dinnertime memory, or a bountiful harvest.

Through those stories, memories, and recipes, we saw the Hoosier spirit reflected again and again. We recognized the artisanal pride and connection to home that comes from preserving and perfecting traditional Indiana foods. We glimpsed the pioneering Hoosier spirit in growers, restaurateurs, and others who charge head-on into the challenges of making a living through food. We experienced the creative, entrepreneurial passion that drives people to take risks and introduce food-based innovations. We witnessed the sense of community that embraces so many independent and family-run operations. And we observed



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real efforts to solve the food-based challenges across the street and around the globe.

In other words, we found the very things we set out looking for: We found Indiana and its people, as expressed through food. Time and time again, we also heard that this—today—is a great moment in Indiana food.

With this one-of-a-kind book that aims to capture that renaissance, we share a sampling of the people we met and a taste of the stories we heard through Food for Thought. Selected as a representative slice of the food culture we encountered in Indiana, *Food for Thought: An Indiana Harvest*, was cooked up by author David Hoppe and photographer/designer Kristin Hess after they spent months pursuing stories from every corner of the state.

Drawn from rural farm fields to urban dining rooms, from high-tech labs to low-tech eateries, and from global corporate

enterprises to tiny mom-and-pop shops, the loving portraits on these pages are like wonderful meals. They offer the familiar and the surprising, a taste of something beloved and a hint of something unknown, and a sense of fulfillment along with a hunger for more. They amuse, intrigue, and satisfy. And, most important perhaps, they offer you an excuse to sit down with someone to talk about common experiences and points of difference.

It's our hope that the spirit of our two-year Food for Thought adventure will continue to thrive throughout Indiana and that this book will help keep the conversation alive. So, please: Eat it up. Savor it. Digest it. And share a portion with someone you love or someone you just met, spicing things up with a few stories of your own.

In that process, you will celebrate and perpetuate Indiana's rich food-based culture, and you will become a part of the wonderful, bountiful collection of stories we call *Food for Thought: An Indiana Harvest*.

Keira Amstutz
President and CEO, Indiana Humanities

INTRODUCTION

Food, like landscape, is easily taken for granted. We eat it, we travel through it and, too often, we forget about it.

People who live in Indiana know something about this.

Indiana, we are frequently reminded (usually by ourselves), is a state without mountains or ocean views. Our landscape lacks the visual crescendos movies and advertising have taught us to associate with lives lived big.

As for food, well, there's the breaded pork tenderloin.

We are justly proud of a certain modesty in our temperament, but modesty neither explains nor justifies overlooking the natural wonders afforded by the state's woodlands and prairies, marshes

and dunes. There is plenty here to reward anyone who is willing to pay attention.

Happily, the only attention required of those who eat—which is all of us—is that we take a bite. And when it comes to Indiana's contemporary food scene, what's happening doesn't merely challenge stereotypes; it purees them.

For the better part of a year, photographer (and Indiana Humanities staff member) Kristin Hess and I traveled Indiana, meeting farmers and chefs, educators and activists. We recorded their stories and captured their images. Through this process, we created what amounts to a chorus of voices and a composite portrait comprised of individuals who are contributing to this burgeoning scene.

Unanimity is almost impossible to come by in a society as complex as ours. But, when it comes to what's happening today with Indiana food, that is what we found. No matter who we talked to, from old-timers to newcomers, everyone agreed this was the most dynamic time they could remember or had ever seen.

This phenomenon is not unique to Indiana. Wherever you go, it seems people are more aware of what they eat, what's in it, and how it is prepared. This is an age of celebrity chefs, the Food Network, and, it must also be said, massive food recalls due to occasionally tainted products.

But even within this larger context, what's happening in Indiana stands out. This has partly to do with our history. Geologically, the state's landscape was



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formed by glacial movements, endowing the place with a particularly rich mix of soils. Even before its settlement, the land that came to be known as Indiana was cultivated by the Indians.

European settlers who migrated to Indiana put down roots of their own, establishing a tradition of family farming that continues to this day. In modern America, where families are extended, blended, and, too often, atomized, it is striking to see how often stories of family continuity, albeit skipping a generation here and there, are found at the heart of Hoosier agriculture.

There is also a story here about the remarkable number of creative individuals for whom Indiana's agricultural history and traditions have provided a ready source of inspiration for the development of new ventures, including urban and organic farming, sustainable livestock ranching, retail businesses and restaurants.

At times, it almost seems as if the entrepreneurial impulse evident in Indiana's food renaissance is a reflexive response to the

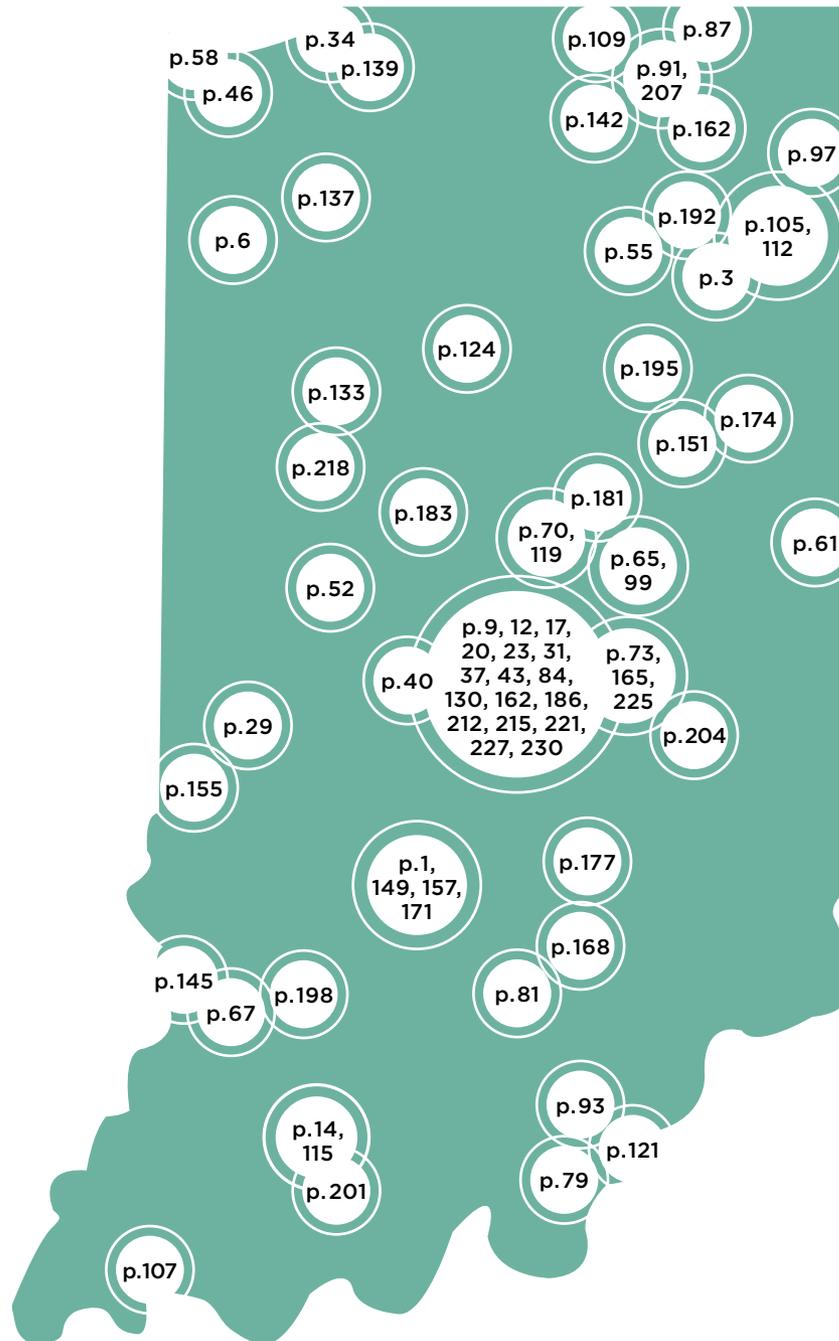
state's manufacturing decline. In any event, it adds a homegrown, handcrafted dimension to the state's economic portfolio. With some of the top chefs in the country seeking products from some of our local producers, the words "Made in Indiana" signal a newfound energy.

What makes this even more remarkable is the fact that at the same time Indiana is experiencing this bottom-up groundswell, it is also home to an array of corporate brands that infuse Hoosier agriculture with a truly global reach.

This juxtaposition of the global and local in Indiana's food scene is perhaps the greatest contributor to its dynamism. It accounts for a creative tension that has the largest purveyors exploring new approaches to sustainability and upstart producers collaborating on new and more efficient ways to expand their markets.

Harvest is definitely here for Indiana food. This book is just one of the signs. Meet the people in these pages; you'll have a hard time taking what you eat for granted ever again.

David Hoppe
Indianapolis, March 2012



{ *Indiana* }

STORIES

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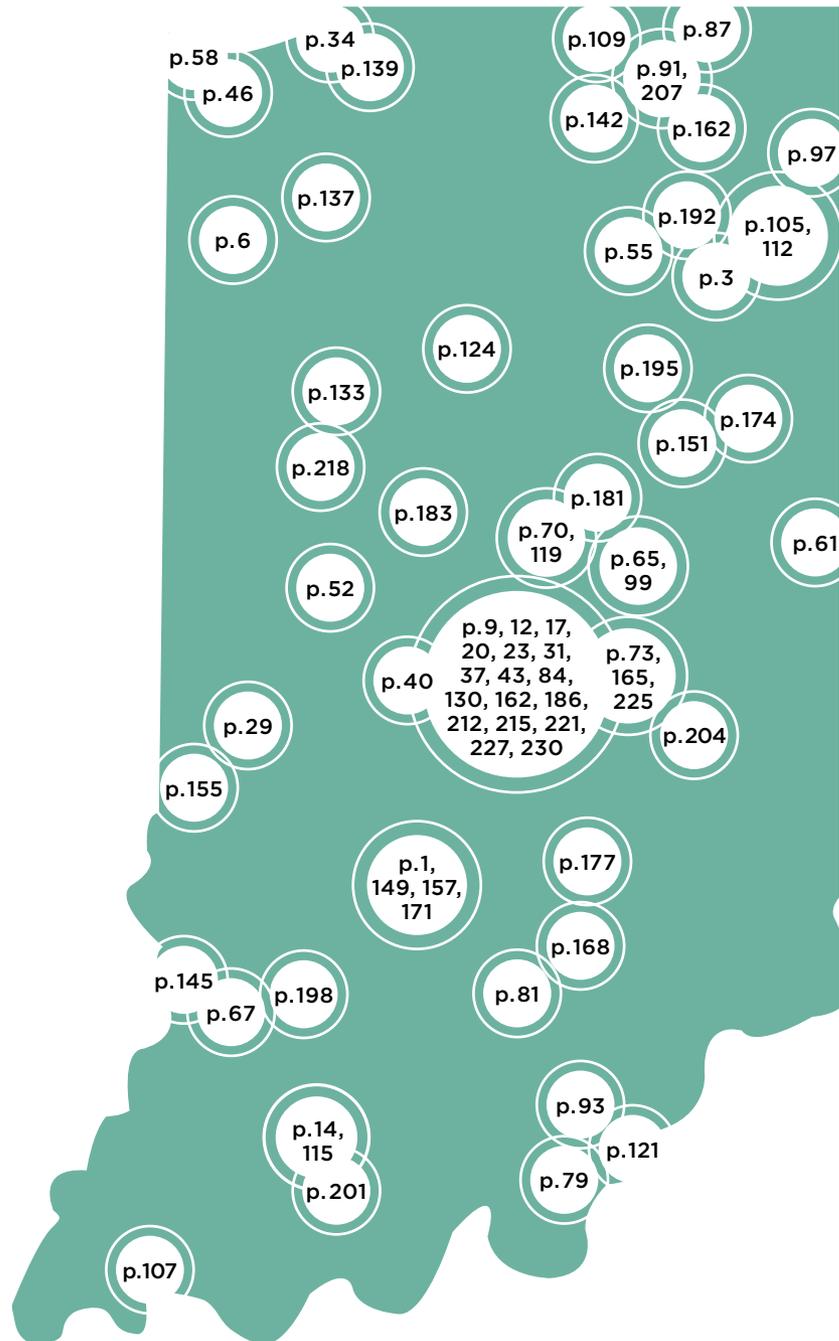
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