

Four Questions with Ricky G.



Ricky G. with a Filet Mignon

If you live in North Miami Beach and you keep kosher, chances are you've shopped at Jacob's Classic Market. And if you've bought meat at Jacob's, then you've run into Ricky G. You know him by his signature black leather fedora, collared shirt with tie and that gold butcher's knife that dangles from his neck. But, most importantly, you know him because his cuts of meat are fantastic. Every piece of meat that comes into the store comes in whole and is butchered and packaged by Ricky and his team. From his signature pargiyot stuffed with sausage (which he makes himself—I bought two after the

interview) to his favorite cut, filet mignon, Ricky G., is not only an all around fantastic person he's a fantastic butcher who loves his craft.



Homemade Sausage (that's beef y'all).

“Wherever there’s meat, I like to cut it.”

Born and raised in New Jersey, an 18 year-old Ricky took a job working at a meat packing warehouse called Empire (no relation). When he first started at Empire his knowledge of meats and butchery wasn't the greatest. As Ricky puts it, “My boss would ask me to fetch some lamb and I would run around the place not knowing what I was looking for.” By 1984, Ricky had made his way down to Florida and took a job at Albertson's as well as Century Kosher, the local kosher grocery store which was conveniently across the street from Albertson's. His shift at Century Kosher ran from 4AM – 2PM and at Albertson's his shift ran from 2PM – 11PM (and this was during Passover y'all). Needless to say, the man was tired.

One of those gigs had to go and it was Albertson's that got the ax, so-to-speak. From there on out, this Italian boy was a kosher butcher for life.

The 4 Questions:

1. JH: So Ricky, what is it about kosher butchery that got you hooked?

RG: When I got into kosher butchery at Century Kosher, I was in awe at what kosher did with the merchandising. At a regular grocery store, they take the chuck and they just grind it. All they do is grind it. In a kosher grocery store, we take the chuck and create every kind of variety you can possibly think of. The meat merchandizing is amazing!

2. JH: What's your favorite cut of kosher meat?

RG: Filet mignon! People think that kosher doesn't do filet mignon but I'm here to tell you we do and it's delicious. A traditional filet mignon is taken from the thigh, near the sciatic nerve, which is a no-no in kosher eating. As a kosher butcher, I create a filet mignon from the center of the rib eye. I trim the fat--it looks and tastes like a regular filet mignon.

3. JH: What do you think of the chain grocery stores in South Florida, i.e. Winn-Dixie, getting in on the kosher scene?

RG: I welcomed them into the store with open arms and tried to give them a few pointers when they came into our store to do some research. They don't have the knowledge to do the kind of butchering I do so I'm not worried about it. They don't really know what they are doing. Their people are sitting in the back Googling 'kosher'.

4. JH: If you had to do any other job, what would you do?

RG: I've done construction, brick laying and carpentry. I

love my job but, if I had to do any other job, I would continue hitting the kids' party scene as Barney. I did that for ten years. My son dressed as Baby Bop and my wife did the sound. I love kids and I love working with people so it was a great job.



The Meat BEFORE Ricky's Got to It



Even Vegetarians Couldn't Deny That Smile!