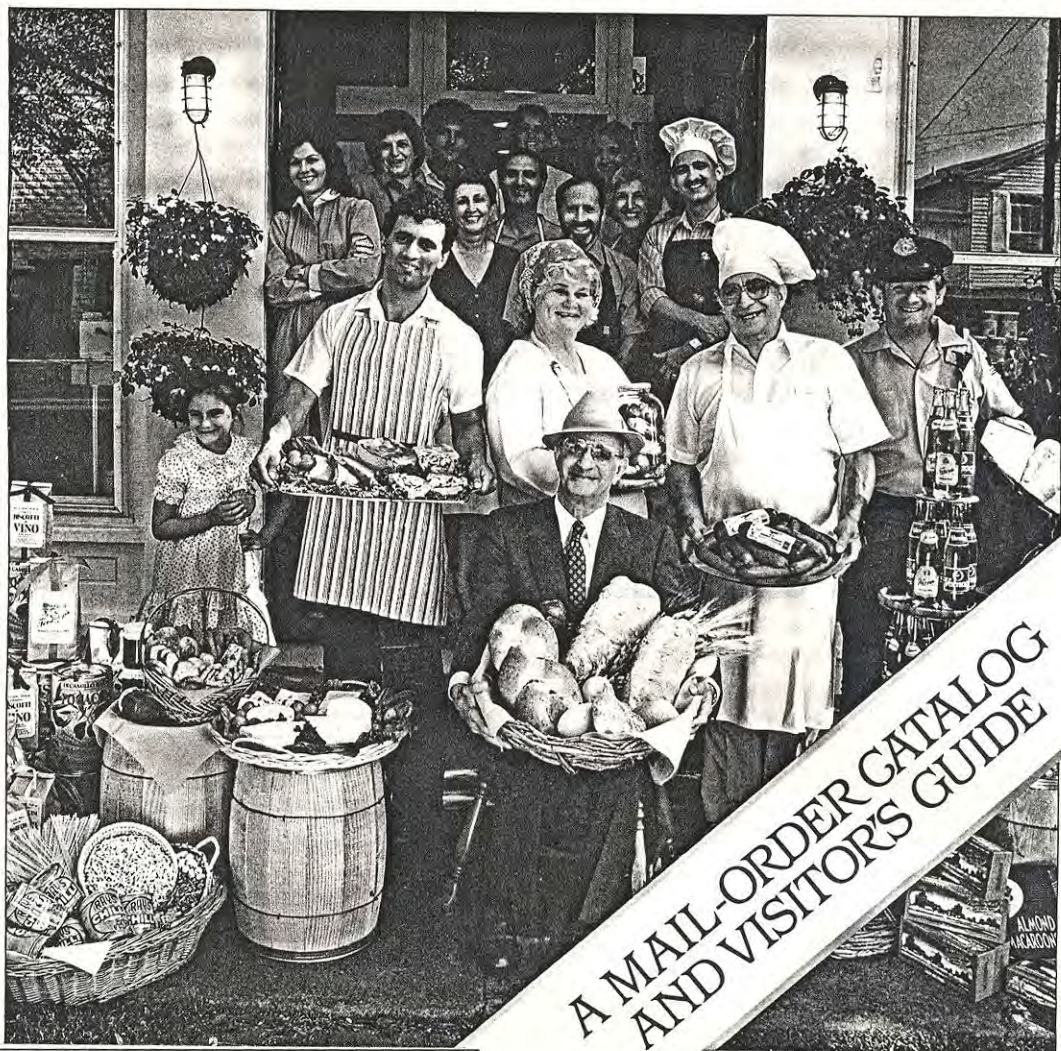


FOOD FINDS

AMERICA'S BEST LOCAL FOODS
AND THE PEOPLE WHO PRODUCE THEM

ALLISON ENGEL & MARGARET ENGEL



ROB SALAMIDA'S STATE FAIR SPIEDIE SAUCE

"Spiedie" is a slightly Anglicized version of *spiedi*, which is Italian for "stick" and refers to fragrant meat chunks that are broiled and served shish kebab style. Long popular among the immigrant communities in upstate New York's Triple Cities (Binghamton, Johnson City, and Endicott), they are made of lamb, pork, or beef that's been marinated in a mixture of red wine vinegar, oil, mint, garlic, thyme, parsley, and other spices. The Slovak, Italian, and Greek immigrants often make a sandwich of the meat, pulling the chunks off the skewer onto a slice of bread.

Native son Rob Salamida got his first experience selling spiedies as an eighth grader, hawking them on the street outside an Endicott delicatessen. When he realized there was no bottled version of a spiedie marinade, he decided to produce one as a moneymaking venture to put himself through college. He started in 1971, renting a booth at the New York State Fair to sell his home-produced blend. The company soon outgrew his parents' home and is now made in a small factory in nearby Johnson City.

The marinade, which is available at grocery stores throughout upstate New York, tenderizes meat and gives it

the aroma of mint and vinegar. The seasoning does not overwhelm the meat, but gives it just enough bite to be interesting.

To explain his hometown treat to outsiders, Salamida has gone so far as to print a "What is a Spiedie?" T-shirt. He also has devised a "spiedie survival kit," containing three bottles of marinade and metal spiedie sticks, which are made for him in the county sheltered workshop.

The marinade is 90¢ for 8 ounces and \$1.70 for 16 ounces at local stores. The survival kit is \$13.95 east of the Mississippi, \$14.95 west of it. Postage is included.

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