



MICHAEL TERCHA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE; MARK GRAHAM/FOOD STYLING

Chicken liver mousse is a smooth, velvety dish made by pureeing the meat along with butter and maybe cream.

Putting together a perfect version easier than you may think

PATE

A picnic

BY PEGGY WOLFE | Chicago Tribune

“Get close up to the pig head,” said Corey Nead, head of butchery for the pate and terrine-making class at Local Butcher Shop in Berkeley, Calif. Seven of us crowded around a pig’s head that was positioned upright on the butcher’s chopping block. If displaying the pig was done for emotional impact, it worked.

Yet, how different was this than the hog butcher stalls at the mercados in Mexico City or Barcelona where I had done my share of wandering and seemed to get through without incident? Other students seemed comfortable — they’d been making sausages at home; some, unfazed, made comments about the metaphor of the pig in William Golding’s “Lord of the Flies.”

Walking in, the little I knew was that a pate was a glutton’s altar of chopped meat, seasoned and immensely rich, evoking the pleasures of a picnic in France, at a scenic rise alongside a river with views of rolling lavender fields. Even if your blanket was laid amid beetle and toad, le déjeuner (lunch) would still have been lovely because you’d brought a baguette, cornichons, some grainy mustard and the perfect wine to complement your pate. Maybe you had Edith Piaf on your playlist to liven things up a bit?

The two-hour class promised a banquet of terrines: pate de campagne, a coarse, country pate; chicken liver mousse, much fancier than chopped chicken liver; and head cheese, meat terrines made

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Worried about making pate? It's a picnic

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from the slow-simmered head of a pig.

Owners Aaron and Monica Rocchino bring in whole animals raised within 150 miles, then dismantle the carcasses in the back room. The trumpeting of farm sources on their chalkboard assured us they were on a first-name basis with the farmer, and maybe even the pig who had given up its life.

Nead's assistant, Nick Bonino, says that pate campagne is basically a big sausage using equal proportions of fat, meat and liver. Even though a pate is one-third fat, judging by the variety of house-made charcuterie at restaurants, and the artisan slabs of pate with proteins of various sorts sold at butcher shops, the signature dish is not falling out of favor.

Many mousse recipes call for soaking the livers in milk overnight, which would get rid of any off-taste, Monica Rocchino agreed. But the Rocchinos omit that step because the livers they buy are from pastured, organic chickens, which make for a great-tasting liver. "When anything is put in conventional plastic, like Cryovac" (a process of vacuum-sealing food in plastic), she said, the flavor is slightly off.

Describing the chicken liver mousse after class was a bit like describing a painting; somehow the words didn't flow. It's just that it's made up of different ingredients that come together to make it what it is. But if you want to up the luxuriant taste and get an even smoother consistency (and you have rendered duck fat on hand, as the Rocchinos do), add a teaspoon or two of duck fat after the liver mixture is blended in the processor.

For the pate de campagne, Bonino cut the pork shoulder into one-inch chunks, saying that if we use leg, it will be too lean. After mixing in seasoning, he fed the mixture into a meat grinder and warned us not to use a plastic blade if we grind it at home. Also, put the bowl over an ice bath so the meat doesn't warm up. Packing the mixture into a terrine looked a bit like, well, meatloaf.

This will be much easier to make than you think. Pates are some of the most rustic foods in France, something peasants would bake in a terrine, chill, and slice up, each cross-section revealing chunks of the ingredients. It's a staple of French chefs, and tastes like pure heaven, yet a steady diet will undoubtedly bring you closer to visiting there.

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Pate de campagne

Prep: 45 minutes, plus cooling time **Cook:** 1 hour, 15 minutes **Chill:** 2 days **Makes:** about 20 servings

Adapted from chef Raymond Blanc, best-selling author, star of the BBC2 series "Kew on a Plate," owner of the Michelin-starred Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, Oxford, England. The smoked streaky bacon, pistachios, crushed juniper berries and thyme leaves give a highly textured appearance when sliced. Pork belly and pork liver are not commonly stocked at butcher shops. Give them a couple of days to order them. Many butchers will also grind the meats and the liver together for you. If you grind the mixture at home, chill your blades and bowl. You will need a 9-by-4-inch terrine mold or bread pan.

- 1/2 pound boned pork shoulder, cut into 1-inch dice
- 1/2 pound pork belly, boned, cut into 1-inch dice
- 1/2 pound smoked bacon, cut into 1-inch dice
- 10 ounces pork liver, cut into 1-inch dice
- 1 egg
- 6 pinches salt
- 2 pinches freshly ground black pepper
- 4 juniper berries, crushed
- 2 pinches Chinese five-spice powder
- 1/2 teaspoon finely chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 1/3 cup white wine, boiled 30-40 seconds
- 2 tablespoons Cognac or another brandy
- 1/4 cup shelled pistachios
- 1 bay leaf
- Couple of sprigs of fresh thyme

1 Heat the oven to 325 degrees. In a food processor, chop the pork shoulder to a coarse mince texture, 20-30 seconds. Transfer the meat to a large mixing bowl. Proceed in the same way with the pork belly, bacon and pork liver, combining all the meats together.

2 Add the egg, salt, pepper, juniper berries, five-spice powder, thyme, white wine, Cognac and pistachios. Using a large spoon, vigorously mix all the ingredients together.

3 Cover the bottom of your terrine mold with plastic wrap that runs up and over the sides, leaving some hangover. Transfer the mixture to the terrine, pressing down and packing the meat using the edge of a spoon. Slap the terrine a couple of times on the work surface to ensure that there are no air gaps and that the mixture is compact. Press a bay leaf and a couple of sprigs of thyme on top of the mixture.

4 Cover loosely with a piece of buttered parchment paper; fold the plastic wrap on top. Place the terrine into a high-sided roasting pan big enough to hold the dish and allow for a lot of water to surround it. Slide roasting pan onto the oven shelf. Pour boiling water into the larger pan until it reaches two-thirds of the way up the sides of the terrine. This technique, bain-marie, or water bath, moderates the temperature



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and prevents the pate from overcooking and drying out. (It will also keep the plastic wrap from melting.)

5 Cook until the internal temperature measures 150 to 160 degrees, about 1 hour, 15 minutes. Remove the terrine from the oven. Lay a piece of cardboard on top, cut to fit. Load a weight on the cardboard, such as a couple of soup cans, to compress the mixture. Cool at room temperature, 2 hours. Pull the plastic wrap out (it should slide easily). Refrigerate for two days to let the flavors grow and mature.

6 To unmold the pate, slide the blade of a sharp knife along the sides of the terrine. Turn the terrine over; tap it onto a tray to free the pate from its mold. Carve generous slices onto plates. Garnish with gherkins or pickled vegetables; serve with rustic bread.

Nutrition information per serving: 132 calories, 10 g fat, 4 g saturated fat, 76 mg cholesterol, 1 g carbohydrates, 8 g protein, 146 mg sodium, 0 g fiber

Chicken liver mousse

Prep: 35 minutes **Chill:** Overnight **Cook:** 10 minutes **Makes:** about 2 1/2 cups, 16-20 servings

This is a refined, classic chicken liver pate that becomes a mousse when whipped cream is folded in, giving it a velvety texture. You can leave out the cream, but don't substitute for it. The mousse can be eaten right away, but the flavor will improve if allowed to chill overnight.

- 1 pound chicken livers
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 2 large shallots, finely slivered
- 2 teaspoons garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons brandy or Cognac
- 5 tablespoons butter, cut into tablespoons, at room temperature
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg, freshly ground
- 1/4 cup heavy whipping cream

1 Remove membranes from the chicken livers. Sprinkle them with sea salt and pepper.

2 Heat the oil in a skillet over high heat. Add the livers; sear, turning to cook all sides. (Do not crowd the pan. Cook in batches if necessary.) Reduce heat to low; cook, stirring often, until livers are browned on the outside but still slightly pink inside, 2-3 minutes. Remove livers to a dish, leaving any liquid in the pan.

3 In the same skillet, cook the shallots and garlic over medium heat until translucent, about 3 minutes. Turn heat to low; carefully add brandy (it will evaporate quickly). Add 4 tablespoons butter and the nutmeg. Stir until blended. Remove from heat; let cool to warm.

4 In a food processor with a metal blade, puree the livers and the butter mixture. Add remaining 1 tablespoon butter; puree to a smooth paste. Season to taste. Using a plastic spatula, force the mixture through a strainer into a small bowl.

5 Whip heavy cream into soft peaks. Fold half into the pate; taste for creaminess before you decide whether to add the rest.

6 Spoon into individual ramekins or a crock, smoothing the top with a knife. Cover with plastic wrap; chill overnight. Keep up to 2 days in the fridge.

Nutrition information per serving: 78 calories, 6 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 90 mg cholesterol, 1 g carbohydrates, 4 g protein, 88 mg sodium, 0 g fiber