



# House-made charcuterie

*Sausages and forcemeats showcase Old-World Craftsmanship and Technique*

**Jeff Decker**

As the fat melts in your mouth and the salt tingles your tongue, you know that you have hit an exalted level of culinary ecstasy. Salty, sweet, delicate, meaty yet refined: these are all attributes which we take comfort in with charcuterie.

Charcuterie has its roots in the earliest periods of cookery as it was a method of preserving meat. A meal

which encounters charcuterie stirs excitement for diners and breeds inspiration for chefs.

In today's dining scene, charcuterie has not only become accepted but it has also been elevated as a bona fide selling point of the restaurant. Diners have grown to accept items such as duck liver and pigs' ears along with other less common proteins such as rabbit or even pigeon as they continue to put aside their inhibitions. Charcuterie has hit the mainstream: It's the stuff we read of in books and magazines and even celebrity chefs tout their virtues on television; you watch, hear, and you want to try it. But, there is an eminent feeling as a diner that you know you can't try this at home – it is a genuine delicacy that must be handled by experts. Charcuterie fits into today's nutritional guidelines too. As people tend to eat less meat, or make sure that the protein they do eat is of the highest quality, the smaller portions consistent with eating charcuterie can be reassuring.

## **To buy or not to buy?**

For the chef who must decide whether charcuterie is right for his/her menu, there is a list of questions that must be answered. First, will it increase sales? Well, if being on trend means an increase in diners, then yes. Next, how extensive an offering needs to be made to present the category in a credible light?



Meats curing at Spruce

## Charcuterie Terms

**Rillettes** are prepared by slowly poaching meats (typically duck, rabbit or pork) until tender, whipping them with a scant amount of fat (usually duck fat) and serving as a cold spread.

**Tourchon** refers to the method of shaping the whipped rillettes and literally means to wrap in a kitchen towel. This method gives the rillettes their cylindrical shape.

Here, the style of charcuterie needs to be a good brand fit – it should not be out of sync with the cuisine, nor should it dominate the menu, but rather it should serve to complement the balance of menu items and flavors.

One of the greatest differentiating factors that the chef must decide upon is whether to buy or not to buy. House-cured meats can be a definite selling point for any restaurant as it takes a chef who is not only capable but also willing to create his/her own. Is it cost-saving? Yes, and no: It can use up meat scraps, therefore keeping food costs low, but demands a higher level of labor. Meanwhile, by sourcing out the items – from broad-liner to specialty distributor – the chef can rest assured that the item will be of a highly consistent and quality product.

## Expertise embraces simplicity and tradition

At those restaurants that do serve house-cured meats, it is a testament to the chef's hard work and expertise. It is such a fine craft that it requires "small batch production" similar to a fine wine or aged liquor. The chef who has created the charcuterie by hand has license to present it simply, without over-bearing flavors and with the inclusion of minimal additional ingredients. This is one element of the menu which should not be reinvented or tinkered with. At restaurants such as Oliveto in Oakland or Spruce in San Francisco, we see the "classical" Old World profiles of salted, cured and smoked meats remain the gold standard for the category. Chef Paul Canales at Oliveto highlights his Italian-inspired menu by creating refined salumi including crespone, mortadella, felino, and Toscano, among others.

At the elegant and contemporary Spruce, Chef Mark Sullivan displays a polished touch with his charcuterie plate which includes items such as a classic French country pate, rabbit rilette with perigord truffles, pig's ear terrine and foie gras mousse. Items such as pork rilette or foie gras served in jars at Chef Walter Manzke's Church & State in Los Angeles serve to unify the menu and define the restaurant's French bistro style.

For the majority of restaurants, from cafes to hotels and even Michelin-starred restaurants, whose chefs would rather source such fine meat creations, charcuterie can be used to fortify dishes or highlight flavors while also setting the tone for the menu and restaurant. Therefore, it is the job of the chef, especially the one who has brought in the ingredient, to bring it to life on the plate. The chef can show off his/her

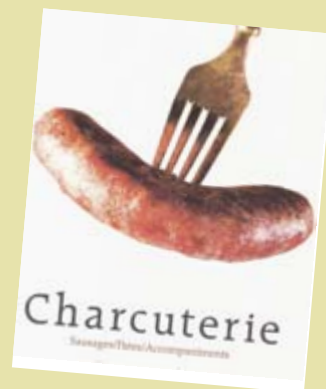


Salami, Soppressetta and Coppa hanging at Oliveto in Oakland, CA

## Charcuterie: Sausages/Pates/ Accompaniments

*Fritz Sonnenschmidt*

Serving as both a primer for the charcuterie novice and a reference tool for the seasoned veteran, Sonnenschmidt's decades of experience has translated into a comprehensive tome of charcuterie, including sections on: tool and equipment choice, meat selection, preparation methods and techniques, casing varieties and of course, recipes. In total, over 200 recipes are included, ranging from very traditional salami and bratwurst to more modern preparations of force-meats and aspics; all of which are weighed out for the commercial kitchen. Also included are recipes for salsas, pickles, mustards and various other accompaniments for the charcuterie plate.



Purchase online at [www.ichapters.com](http://www.ichapters.com)

## Where to Order Charcuterie and Salumi if you aren't making it in-house

### Fatted Calf Charcuterie

Napa, CA

[www.fattedcalf.com](http://www.fattedcalf.com)

Featuring an ever-changing menu of seasonal charcuterie ranging from duck rillettes and andouille sausage to wild boar salame and Pâté de Campagne.

### Boccalone Salumeria

San Francisco, CA

[www.boccalone.com](http://www.boccalone.com)

Specializing in Italian cured meats such as prosciutto, lonza, guanciale and lardo.

### Fra'Mani Handcrafted Salumi

Berkeley, CA

[www.framani.com](http://www.framani.com)

Known for their classic Italian sausages and dry salami.

knowledge by serving it with accompaniments or in composed dishes. This can often still present a challenge, and we can therefore still accredit the chef who puts charcuterie on his menu with much acclaim.

### Keep your guests and culinary team captivated

Charcuterie serves not only to attract the guest to the restaurant, it can also captivate a cook to come and be part of

a kitchen. From a chef's point of view, working in a kitchen where charcuterie is made is a great opportunity for the highest level of training and education in techniques that are not widespread. The soft-spoken and unassuming expert in his craft, Chef Sullivan's face lights up when discussing his variety of cured meats, explaining that his kitchen will take in a whole pig, and not just any pig, but different heritages of swine, and grind, cure and cook the different cuts in a myriad of ways. Chef Paul Canales employs a small, tight-knit crew, which allows him and his team to give each product the same care and adoration which produces the most refined charcuterie every time.

Pairing of charcuterie with beverages such as wine or beer is a great opportunity for the sommelier. At Spruce, the charcuterie plate is paired with not one but three very different beverages. The first, a Veuve Fourny Rose Champagne; the second – a Riesling Spaetlese; and the third – the Duchesse du Bourgogne, a Flemish red ale. Each of these paired very succinctly with the different sweet, savory and salty flavors on the plate.

Whether or not the charcuterie is made in-house, the craftsmanship and skill that is the art of charcuterie will differentiate the menu and bring excitement to both the chef and the diner.



*Jeffrey Decker graduated from UC Berkeley before training as a chef at Spago Beverly Hills and at small luxury hotels in both Ireland and Mississippi. He now works as a chef and project coordinator at The Culinary Edge in San Francisco where he has consulted on concept and menu development projects for the top chain restaurants in the country. He has also launched numerous new*

*concepts while developing retail items for commercialization.*  
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## DUCK RILLETES TOURCHON *(Photo on Page 2)*

### INGREDIENTS

10 duck leg confit (recipe listed below or can be purchased at specialty markets)  
6 shallots, minced  
1 lb. black trumpet mushrooms (or other wild mushroom)  
1 black truffle (can be purchased at specialty stores)  
2 Tbl. black truffle oil  
1 Tbl. minced chive  
1 Tbl. minced parsley  
3 Tbl. duck fat  
1 Tbl. butter

### METHOD

Warm duck legs and hand shred. Sauté shallots in butter with mushrooms until tender. Add to duck meat. Mix in herbs and warm duck fat. Season with salt, white pepper and four spice. Form into roulades and roll up in plastic wrap. Let set in refrigerator for at least one half hour.

## DUCK LEG CONFIT

### INGREDIENTS

10 ea. Peking duck legs  
3 Tbl. salt  
1 Tbl. sugar  
3 cloves garlic, crushed  
12 ea. juniper berries crushed  
12 ea. peppercorns crushed  
1 bunch thyme  
2 1/2 cups duck fat

### METHOD

Mix all ingredients together and spread evenly over duck legs. Press firmly with a weight and store in refrigerator for three days. After the third day rub off marinade completely and cook very slowly over stove top in duck fat until just tender. **\*Note:** meat should shred easily off the bone.

**Chef/Partner Mark Sullivan**  
Spruce, San Francisco, CA

Recipes from:  
Church & State, Los Angeles:  
*C&S Foie Gras Terrine*  
*C&S Jambon Persille*

Oliveto  
Oakland, CA  
(510)547.5356 • www.oliveto.com

Spruce  
San Francisco, CA  
(415)931.5100 • www.sprucesf.com

Church & State  
Los Angeles, CA  
(213)405.1434 • www.churchandstatebistro.com

## CHURCH & STATE CHARCUTERIE PLATE

### FOIE GRAS TERRINE

1 lobe grade a foie gras  
Salt  
Fresh ground white pepper  
1 cup heavy cream  
1 btl. good quality Port wine  
1 T sugar  
Gelatin sheets

### METHOD

Bring foie gras to room temp. Sealed in a cryovac bag. Cook in a 68 degrees Celsius water bath for 20 minutes. Put cooked foie gras through a sieve to remove all veins.

Put foie gras which should still be warm into a large mixing bowl. Season to taste with salt and white pepper. Whip foie gras over an ice bath until it becomes smooth, light and airy. Remove from the ice and let sit at room temp.

In another bowl whip cream until very soft peaks and fold into foie gras. Put foie gras into a plastic piping bag and fill into small sterilized mason jars. Cool foie gras with the jars open.

Reduce port wine by 50%. Add sugar. Weigh reduced port and add 1 sheet of gelatin for every 100 grams of liquid. Let cool to room temp. Pour just enough over the top of each jar just to cover and seal the foie gras. When port wine is set, seal jars.

### JAMBON PERSILLÉ

1 ea. 5 to 6 lb. cured ham, bone in  
5 lbs. pig's feet  
4 qt. light chicken or pork stock  
4 carrots  
2 large onions  
1 leek, white part  
2 cloves  
thyme  
bay leaf  
parsley stems  
1/2 btl. White wine  
2 bunch Italian parsley, chopped fine and washed  
2 cloves garlic  
2 Tbl. Banyuls vinegar  
Salt  
Fresh ground black pepper



### METHOD

Put pigs feet in a large pot covered with cold water and bring to a boil. Take pot from the stove and run under cold water until pigs feet are clean and free from any blood. Put pigs feet back into the large pot; add 1 onion and 2 carrots cut into 1 to 2" pieces.

Cover with chicken stock and bring to a simmer. Cover pot and place in a 325°F oven for about 5 hours or until pigs feet are tender and falling from the bones. When cooked, strain broth through several layers of cheese cloth and reserve.

Cool pigs feet slightly just to the point they can be handled and remove all the bones from the pigs feet. Completely cool pigs feet and cut into 1/4" dice. These steps can be done ahead.

In a large pot reduce white wine by 75%, add ham cut into 1" cubes and the ham bone, Banyuls vinegar, the reserved broth and the cleaned pigs feet.

Bring to a simmer and skim pot. With a piece of cheese cloth tied with butchers twine, wrap 2 carrots, 1 onion, 1 leek (all large diced) along with 2 cloves, 1 bay leaf, a few sprigs of thyme and a few parsley stems.

Add to the pot. Everything should be just covered by the broth without too much excess. Cover pot and place in a 300°F oven for 2 to 3 hours until ham is fork tender. Remove ham bone and cheese cloth bouquet.

Add 2 cloves minced garlic, salt and fresh ground black pepper to taste. Let ham cool to room temp. Fill a terrine mold with layers of ham and pigs feet, broth and plenty of chopped parsley. Chill and unmold.

**Chef Walter Manzke**  
Church & State  
Los Angeles, CA

