

French Country Pâté Snack Board

A breezy pâté board and a bottle of wine are the ideal way to kick off any wine country picnic or festive outdoor meal. This flavorful country-style pâté takes time to prepare, but the results are well worth it. Curing salt, which helps the pâté develop rich color, can be found in the seasonings aisle of well-stocked grocery stores, in butcher shops, and online. Purchase caul fat, which ensures the pâté retains its shape, from a butcher shop.

MAKES ONE 2-QUART PÂTÉ; 12–14 SERVINGS

¼ lb pork liver
2 cups whole milk
½ lb pork fatback, cut into
½-inch cubes
2 lb boneless pork shoulder,
cut into 1-inch cubes
1 tablespoon coarse sea salt
¼ teaspoon pink curing salt #1
½ teaspoon freshly ground
pepper
1 fresh or ½ dried bay leaf
2 allspice berries
2 juniper berries
¼ teaspoon each mustard seeds
and sweet paprika
Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
¼ cup each brandy and chicken
broth
3 cups heavy cream
2 tablespoons fresh bread crumbs
1 piece caul fat, 16 inches square
Cornichons, grainy mustard,
and baguette slices, for serving

The day before you plan to assemble and bake the pâté, put the liver and milk into a small bowl. In a large bowl, combine the fatback, pork shoulder, sea salt, curing salt, pepper, bay leaf, allspice and juniper berries, mustard seeds, paprika, nutmeg, and brandy. Using your hands, mix well. Cover and refrigerate both bowls overnight.

The next day, drain the liver, rinse well under cold running water, pat dry with paper towels, and cut into 1-inch cubes. Add to the pork mixture and mix well. Transfer the pork mixture to a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Return the mixture to the large bowl.

In a medium bowl, stir together the broth, cream, and bread crumbs. Add to the meat mixture and mix with your hands. Return the mixture to the food processor and pulse until well mixed, 1 to 2 minutes; it will be a loose, wet mixture.

Preheat the oven to 300°F. Line a 2-quart terrine mold (or a 9 x 5-inch loaf pan) with the caul fat, allowing it to drape over the ends and sides. Tightly pack the meat mixture into the prepared mold and tap the mold on the work surface several times to eliminate any air pockets. Fold the overhanging caul fat over the top of the meat mixture to enclose completely. Cover the mold with its lid or aluminum foil and place it in a larger baking dish. Pour boiling water into the larger dish to reach halfway up the sides of the mold.

Bake the pâté, adding more boiling water during cooking if the level drops, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center registers 145°F, about 1½ hours. Remove from the oven. Remove the cover and top the hot pâté with a weight, such as a foil-wrapped brick, to press out any excess juices. Let cool to room temperature, then refrigerate, covered, for at least 2 days or up to 4 days before serving.

To serve, cut the pâté into ½-inch-thick slices. Place on a board and arrange the cornichons, mustard, and baguette slices around the pâté.