

Time Out

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Eat Out

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Sausage party

Charcuterie, an age-old craft, is back in style (p.27)



Eat Out

More than meats the eye

Charcuterie is suddenly one of the hottest foods in NYC. But what is it, really? By Jordana Rothman

The word *charcuterie*, which even Gotham's more enlightened gastronomes can only loosely define as pâtés, terrines and other monochromatic meats stealing real estate on the yuppie cheese board, has been on the lips of the food-world cognoscenti, thanks to the recent opening of Bar Boulud (1900 Broadway at 64th St, 212-595-0303). To launch this wine-and-charcuterie-focused eatery, chef Daniel Boulud recruited Gilles Verot, one of Paris's premier charcutiers, to establish a program of the most classic examples of the centuries-old delicacy. "The earliest charcutiers created specialties for each part of the pig so the entire animal could be used," explains Verot. Still can't tell your *saucisse* from your rillettes? *TONY* breaks it down.

Sausage

Descended from ancient preservation methods, sausage making is its own sect within the craft of charcuterie. Historically, charcuterie has included anything from **saucisson**—which refers to dried sausages like the *saucisson sec de Lyon* in the photo—to **saucisse**, or freshly made links that require cooking, such as boudin noir (blood sausage).

Pâté

"Pâté"—the traditional, often pork-based delicacy prepared in wide, shallow loaf pans—"is the most basic product of French charcuterie," says Verot. A typical variety is the *pâté de campagne*, or **country pâté**. The term *country* refers to the texture of the meat—unlike a smooth mousse, country-style denotes a coarse grind. Also, pâtés are often blanketed in **aspic**, an ultraclarified jelly made from stock, to give the surface a pleasing gleam and protect the meat from oxidizing.

Terrine

Unlike pâtés, which usually have a uniform consistency, terrines—made from a combination of lean meat and fat from pork, poultry or game—can be identified by the layers and large chunks that are revealed when the product is sliced. As with pâtés, the meat usually marinates for up to 24 hours in its seasonings—often salt and pepper with port, brandy or cognac—before being layered in a pan, cooked and then aged for three to five days. Terrines take their name from the vessel in which they are prepared—deep, rectangular dishes with tightly fitted lids.

Headcheese

Fearsome name notwithstanding (note: there's no *fromage* involved), headcheese is among the most subtle delicacies in the realm of charcuterie. The dish is prepared by boiling a hog's head with its organs removed in a wine-and-herb bouillon. When the flesh—the snout and cheeks are considered the most desirable bits—begins to fall from the bone, the head is removed and the meat picked from the skull. It's then bound together in **gelée**—a gelatinous substance similar to aspic but not clarified—and cooked. If you can, stomach the process (you eat hot dogs, don't you?), headcheese has a lush flavor, and the gelée melts on the tongue.

En croûte

This term refers to a pâté or terrine encased in a savory pastry crust. "The crust can be *brisée* [flaky], *feuilletée* [puffed] or *briochée* [brioche]," explains Verot. Crusts will often be pierced to allow steam to release during the cooking process. The holes will later be used to funnel jus back into the mold to moisten and add flavor to the finished product. The pictured terrine en croûte is actually a **tourte**—constructed of meats worthy of showcasing. In this case it's partridge, pheasant, foie gras, sweetbreads and duck.

Rillettes

(not pictured)

Like most charcuterie, rillettes are traditionally pork-based, but can also be made with rabbit, goose or other fowl. They are prepared like a confit—the meat is cooked in fat for up to 12 hours—before being ground into a smooth paste, siphoned into ramekins, chilled and served cold. The final destination: smeared over toast.

Salads

Due to its unctuous quality, charcuterie is best complemented by an acidic salad. **Celery rémoulade**, seen here, includes oil-cutting attributes like lemon juice, Dijon mustard and tart green apple. **Cornichons**, better known as gherkins, do the trick as well. "[The acidity] shows off to the best advantage the taste of charcuterie," says Verot.