



RUSTIC CHICKEN LIVER PÂTÉ

This is an amalgam of recipes that I have tried. I don't routinely have heavy cream on hand, so this recipe stands well without it. The lemon and capers add a bright note. It is hand chopped rather than pureed, thus, 'rustic.' Combing the web for inspiration, I find that people tend to be passionate about their pâté, effusive, even. Let me know what you think of this one.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound chicken livers, rinsed, pat dry
- Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
- ¼ c. butter
- 2 T finely chopped shallot (or onion)
- 2 oz. pancetta, thinly sliced and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ c. Sweet vermouth, Sherry, Madeira, or other fortified wine (Brandy or Cognac also work, but cut back to ¼ c.) (Use whatever is available in your liquor cabinet ;-)
- 1 T tomato paste
- 2T finely chopped parsley
- 2 T capers, rinsed, drained and coarsely chopped
- 1 lemon, zest finely grated and 1T juice
- ~1/2 cup quality olive oil

Season livers generously on both sides with salt and pepper; set aside.

Heat butter in large heavy skillet over medium heat. Add shallots/onions and pancetta. Sauté to soften shallots/onions and render fat from pancetta, ~5 minutes. Do not discard the fat. Stir in garlic, and sauté until aromatic, 1-2 minutes more. Stir in tomato paste to distribute.

Clear a space in the middle of the pan to add the livers. Raise the heat to med-high. If you pan is dry, add a little more butter. Add livers one at a time to ensure that they make good contact with the hot fat in the pan. Sear them for 1-2 minutes on each side. (After you've added the last ones to the pan, the first ones should be ready to flip over.) A chicken liver takes very little time to cook through, so don't overdo it! They cook a little in the next step.

Add your alcohol of choice, shake pan to loosen everything and deglaze...help that along with a spatula. Once most of the alcohol has mostly evaporated, remove the pan from the heat.

Dump entire contents of pan onto a large cutting board. Pile parsley, capers and lemon zest on top of livers and drizzle them with lemon juice and ¼ c. of the olive oil.

Chop everything together coarsely with a large knife. Re-gather ingredients into a mound as they spread out, mixing as you do so. Add more olive oil as needed. Your goal is to form a coarse paste, almost pureed, but with more texture. It should be able to hold its shape in a nice mound on your bread or cracker.

Serve immediately with the bread vehicle of your choice, or cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Makes about 2 cups.