

Chicken Liver Pâté – Tom Kilner

Preamble

I can't claim a lengthy family pedigree for this recipe. I could have submitted my grandfather's recipe for peanut butter cookies but thought better of it. As a frugal Brit, he once substituted bacon fat for the butter in the recipe. Apparently, he didn't like that combo, so tried to gift them to my aunt with predictable results. As the story goes, my aunt threw them out for the squirrels, who in turn, refused to eat them.

The recipe for the pâté was one I found in Starweek many years ago (I hate to think how many, probably close to 40). They had a feature called Chefs Showcase demonstrating recipes requested by readers from their favourite Chefs in Toronto. This one is from Paul Biggs when at Le Select Bistro.



Ingredients:	Measure	Amt = 2 lbs	1 lb	½ lbs
chicken livers	oz	21	10.5	5.25
large onion thinly sliced	unit	1	1/2	1/4
thinly sliced mushrooms	cups	2	1	1/2
Dijon mustard	tbsp	3	1.5	3/4
olive oil	tbsp	2	1	1/2
green peppercorns	tbsp	3	1.5	3/4
dried thyme leaves	tbsp	1	1/2	1/4
salt	tsp	1 1/2	3/4	3/8
bay leaf	Unit	1	1/2	1/4
garlic finely chopped	clove	½	1/4	1/8
butter softened	pound	1	1/2	1/4
brandy	oz	1 ½	3/4	3/8
Tabasco sauce	tsp	1	1/2	1/4

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Recipe:

- In a large casserole combine trimmed livers, onions and mushrooms.
- Combine oil and mustard and blend with livers.
- Mix in 2 tbsp of the peppercorns, thyme, salt, bay leaf, and garlic.
- Bake uncovered in a 350 F oven 30 to 45 minutes or until livers are cooked and onions tender.
- Remove and discard bay leaf.
- Puree livers in a food processor and blend in the softened butter.
- Mix in brandy, Tabasco sauce, and the remaining peppercorns.
- Press into an 8x4x2 inch mold or individual ramekins.
- Chill until firm.
- Makes 2 lbs of pâté.

The ingredients are flexible according to whim and availability. Green, white or black peppercorns work, as does brandy, cognac, rum, scotch etc. Don't substitute for the butter! The mushrooms are usually the common white mushrooms, but portabella or cremini are obviously OK, and for the foragers among us chanterelles, or porcini. The onion could be leek, scallions or shallots, and the liver could also be duck, goose or turkey. The proportion of butter to liver should be maintained, as it determines the final texture, which is very spreadable at room temperature. The recipe makes a generous amount, and freezes well.