



the 400

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Pork Foodservice news you need right now.

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TRENDS

On the heels of the house made charcuterie trend that swept restaurants nationwide, fresh sausage has found its stage presence as a center of the plate specialty, with or without the traditional bun. Even at quick-serve restaurants, sausage has outpaced other pork dishes like ribs, and it's moved beyond just the breakfast daypart, according to foodservice research firm Technomic.

“The whole nose-to-tail, house made charcuterie, butchering in-house and locavore trends of the previous few years are all starting to come together – in the form of encased meat,” says Dave Derr of The Weiner Wagon in Kansas City.

Forget about just basic hot dogs and brats. Trend-setting food trucks have led the fresh sausage “movement” with their innovative creations, encasing pork with everything from beer and blueberries to truffle and chilies, and restaurant chefs have since jumped on board.

Playful Pairings

Chefs have taken the classics a step further, with some fresh sausages really pushing the envelope when it comes to homemade encased meats. In fact, making sausages in-house rather than simply relying on artisan producers allows more room for experimentation with different flavors, ingredients, meats and textures, with pork as the base.



Specialty sausage classics like Polish, Italian and chorizo have grown in volume over the past two years (13MM pounds), especially among full-service restaurants and at dinnertime, according to Technomic. Italian sausage reigns as the popular favorite, at 58 percent of total specialty sausage volume, but chorizo has been growing at the most aggressive rate.

Keenan Goldis, owner of Goldis Sausage Company, a food truck in Austin, Texas, draws inspiration for his innovative creations from taste experiences at other restaurants. His Hawaiian pizza inspired sausage is made with ground pork shoulder, pepperoni, tomato powder, pineapple chunks, mozzarella, oregano and

crushed red pepper, ground together and stuffed in a natural pork casing, and served simply on a bun.

“I try to get an entire meal to be in a sausage casing,” Goldis says, explaining his reasoning for a lack of toppings and simple serving style – toasted bun or sliced and plated. He’s even stuffed side dishes like mac and cheese in a ground pork mix, and his apple pie sausage comes with chunks of apple sautéed in butter and even includes pie crust. The blueberry mint maple version with seasonal blueberries cooked in balsamic and maple syrup also pushes the sweet meets savory sausage envelope.

Derr of The Weiner Wagon starts with his favorite dishes to come up with innovative sausage ideas. For example, his love of eggs benedict expresses itself as a bacon benedict sausage with hollandaise sauce, made from pork fatback mixed together with belly and shoulder. At breakfast, a sausage might come on a New England style bun served with sausage gravy and a fried egg. At lunch, it comes as a BLT with garlic aioli, shredded romaine and homegrown tomatoes. At dinnertime, the sausage might come with a corn, edamame and hominy succotash. “As a chef I try to figure out how to present the sausage differently,” he says.

Innovation must begin with the basics though, says Derr, from investing in the right grinders, sausage stuffers, and measuring utensils for recipe development and consistency, to making sure the equipment and environment is cold while working. After seasoning and “marinating” the meat for four to 24 hours like any traditional sausage, the mixing process opens up the possibilities for experimentation. Sometimes, in place of simple water used in emulsified fresh sausage making, he might use beer. His green chile sausage combines Pacifico beer with chilies, baja seasoning, and Valentina, a smooth, Mexican hot sauce, and Deer serves it simply, on a bun.

Texture twists also plays into the trend. At Frank in Austin, Texas, Chef Daniel Northcutt likes to “experiment with different mouthfeel and texture,” he says, by preparing the fresh sausages, then poaching and finishing them on the grill. For a take on a Reuben sandwich, Northcutt prepared the daily special by mixing corned beef with pork and crunchy sauerkraut.

Adding texture-varied toppings is also part of the fun. Frank’s Texalina beef and pork sausage comes with a grilled horseradish coleslaw and mustardy Carolina-based barbecue sauce for added crunch. Customers can also swap in the fried fennel normally atop a vegetarian sausage for any other sausage for a licorice bite.

Center of the Plate

Thanks to a growing interest in sausage, encased meats have been increasingly pushed into the spotlight as center of the plate items served with their own special sides and innovative toppings. Their increase in popularity at dinnertime seems to have helped the center of the plate trend; according to Technomic, specialty sausage served later in the day has outpaced lunch volume at 43 percent, compared to 39 percent, respectively. Specialty sausage sees more volume at dinner than even breakfast at 13 percent and snacks at just five percent.

Chef Anthony Piscioneri of DC-3 in Washington D.C. gets inspiration for his toppings and sides from the ingredients in the sausages and their cuisine type. His homemade Italian sausage partners with fresh mozzarella, tomato bruschetta, balsamic vinegar reduction and basil aioli on buttery brioche. From the specials menu, a traditional Wisconsin brat might pair up with fried cheese curds, while a chorizo sausage comes with a blistered tomatillo sauce or cilantro-lime sauce, chayote slaw, Latin crema and queso fresco.



On “The Butcher” section of his menu, Chef Justin Brunson, of Old Major in Denver, CO offers a Hatch Green Chile sausage on his menu made with New Mexican green chiles, pork and spices. He serves the dish with roasted tomatillo, radish, Olathe sweet corn, lime crema, cilantro, grilled onion and avocado.

At Osteria in Philadelphia, James Beard Award winning Chef Jeff Michaud serves “Ciareghi” Cotechino with soft polenta

and sunny-side up egg. The housemade cotechino is spiced with cinnamon, black pepper, allspice, nutmeg, clove and white wine.

Multi-Meat Encasing

Sausage doesn’t always have to be 100 percent pork – but, chefs find the versatile meat serves as a perfect base for binding textures, especially when working with delicate seafood, and for mellowing out stronger flavors found in game meats.

“Pork is great as a base because it mellows things out, adds a good fat ratio and smooths out other flavors and textures,” says Northcutt, who blends ground pork with rabbit and antelope for a quirky “jackelope” sausage with cranberry compote and tangy-hot sriracha sauce. Still, he keeps things consistent with a 50/50 meat/fat ratio that always includes pork.



Chef Mark Steuer of Carriage House in Chicago has also experimented with rabbit in fresh sausages. In his low country boil, he combines the meat with pork shoulder and belly for fat, and seasons the mixture with spices like cayenne, paprika, cumin, black pepper, chili powder, thyme and celery seed. “It’s kind of a cross between a Spanish Chorizo and andouille with a twist,” he says.

At Salt and Cleaver, a new dining concept based on the ancient art of sausage making in San Diego, Executive Chef Carlos Sanmartano uses pork to tone down any strong game flavors. For instance his homemade duck and bacon sausage with garlic, leeks, tarragon includes pork as the base. The sausage is then topped with an orange marmalade-duck confit as a way to “have some fun playing with different proteins and fats.”

“We’re not reinventing the wheel as much as offering a different vessel for a classic dish like duck à l’orange,” he says.



At Hot Doug’s, Doug Sohn sources a smoked shrimp and pork sausage from an artisan sausage maker in New Orleans. The “Shrimp ‘n’ Grits” menu item includes smoked shrimp and pork sausage with creole mustard, hominy grits and goat cheese. “It’s a classic Cajun-style pork sausage, not quite as spicy as Andouille, but in the same style, and with Gulf Coast shrimp added to the sausage mix,” says Sohn.

Old World is New Again

Chefs are going beyond the basic brat by taking them a step further – introducing new spices and ingredients into the mix and experimenting with other takes on German classics as well as old world sausages from other parts of the world. Phillip Lopez, executive chef at the recently opened Root in New Orleans, makes a German bloodwurst sausage adapted from the traditional poached beef tongue sausage.

For his take, Lopez mixes pork, blood and fat back with cinnamon, clove, and all spice, then blends in beef tongue that was sous vide, pickled and smoked to tenderize and tone down strong flavors. “We then peel the tongue and cut it down in strips, laying out the pork meat around it in a square and then rolling the sausage by hand between four and five inches thick in diameter.” Lopez finishes the elaborate encased sausage by poaching it sous vide style to cook the rest of

the way and serves it as part of the “sausage fest” platter with flatbread, pretzel buns and pickled vegetables.

Lopez has even experimented with Swedish sausage, adding a twist to classic cervelat, traditionally made with veal brain. “We switched to sweet breads,” he says. Poached and smoked sweet breads are mixed with pork in larger chunks, and then served as halved or quartered medallions. “Cervelat is different from other sausages because it is smoked first, then poached, while many fresh sausages are poached first then smoked.”



At Root, Lopez also makes morcilla, a traditional Spanish blood sausage with pork meat and belly, pork blood, smoked paprika, cinnamon, clove, all spice and Spanish-style, short grain rice cooked with onions and fresh herbs. “In the Basque region close to France you might find apples added to the sausage,” he says, noting that he also adds milk-soaked bread crumbs to help further emulsify the sausage and sherry for some extra tartness. The sausage is then slow-poached in a court bouillon stock before chilled or served.

Ethnic Flair

From twists on chorizo to Asian-inspired versions, fresh sausage has become a perfect vehicle for experimenting with global cuisines.

At Laurelhurst Market Restaurant and Butcher Shop in Portland, head butcher Spencer Adams makes a pork shoulder-based green chorizo sausage with cilantro, jalapeño, and roasted poblano peppers mixed with Mexican oregano, cumin and coriander. The restaurant has paired the sausage with mussels in a fennel and white wine broth served with frites.

At Root, Lopez passes up traditional chorizo for salchichas, a Mexican-style, emulsified fresh sausage traditionally served at breakfast or as a mid-day snack. Pork meat is spiced with cumin, cinnamon, clove, nutmeg, all spice, chili flakes and fresh cilantro, then blended with eggs, a little cream and fat back for a deliciously creamy texture.

Goldis of Goldis Sausage Company looks to Asian flavors when experimenting with new sausages. For his green curry version, Goldis blends a homemade green curry paste with peanuts, Thai basil and cilantro. His newest creation, a Pad Thai sausage, combines pork with tamarind beans and paste, ground peanuts and chiles, that he serves on a classic bun.

“I feel Asian ingredients are underutilized in sausage,” he says. “You can put almost any Asian flavor inside a sausage casing as long as you know how to incorporate it right.”



At Salt and Cleaver, Sanmartano’s homemade pork belly sausage, which experiments with Asian flavors, is a guest favorite. The pork belly is incorporated with a lemongrass-ginger relish, and then the sausage is topped with a pickled cucumber relish, rice vinegar radishes and sambal vinaigrette like a bahn mi of sorts. “Sausage is like a blank canvas for so many other flavors,” Sanmartano says.

What began as a slew of restaurants opening up their own butcher shops has led to a burgeoning back-of-house movement with chefs making their own artisan, signature fresh sausages. From pork belly to sweet breads, Asian flavors to nutmeg and clove, chefs have opened their meat racks and spice racks to reinvent today’s sausages. The possibilities remain endless, as long as they’re based on traditional techniques, and, pork is used as a base. No longer a simple sandwich or ballpark snack, the encased meat has a new position as a profit-making, plate-forward protein and vehicle for continued creativity.

“It’s truly inspiring to see all the things we can do with sausages,” says Northcutt. “Chefs are really starting to rediscover sausage and it’s fun to be a part of that.”

It’s clear – fresh sausage is the new charcuterie. And pork is the base of it all, literally.

BRINING

Brine, also called “pickle,” is a solution of salt and water. While many people use the terms interchangeably, pickle is used to designate a salt-and-water solution that also contains nitrite or cure. Brine or pickle may also contain other seasonings such as dry spices, herbs, or aromatic vegetables that add appealing background flavors. In Italy brine is also called *salamoia* and in some Italian salumerie, meats, particularly beef or veal tongue, can be seen floating in large earthenware crocks in a spicy brine that includes juniper, peppercorns, allspice berries, bay leaves, garlic, and thin-sliced carrot, celery, and onion. Brined meats are typically boiled and served either cold as an antipasto or hot as a secondo, following soup or pasta. Apart from the enhancement the meat receives through its absorption of salt and seasonings, brining also has a tenderizing and moistening effect. Brining requires more or less time depending upon the thickness and density of the cut of meat. As long as the meat remains submerged in brine, the brine is absorbed and diffused slowly throughout the meat. I don't recommend brining very thick cuts of meat, as those thicker than 3 inches may spoil at the center before the salt penetrates.

I use straight immersion brines primarily for pickling tongues and ears destined for cold antipasti, and for other trim cuts used in special cooked sausages that benefit from the additional seasonings, cured flavor, and color they pick up. Thin cuts of pork, such as boneless loin and tenderloin, as well as cubed meats from the leg or shoulder require a matter of three to five days to drink up the brine and are delicious skewered and grilled on a wood fire.

If you wish to make your own fresh ham, or brine denser cuts such as shoulders or heavy loins, it is wise to inject them first with brine using a brine pump before immersing them in brine. This is the surest way to introduce salt to the center of a dense cut of meat, where it is most vulnerable to spoilage. Submerging the meat afterwards in the brine allows the brine ingredients to diffuse and equalize throughout the meat.

The basic procedure for brining follows. I include this procedure in the event that the weights of the meat you wish to brine do not correspond to the recipes below. In such a case, it is important when working with percentages of salt or parts per million (ppm) of nitrite to understand the reasoning behind the recipes as the brine elements are based on the weight of the meat and the water it contains.

When formulating your brine there are two calculations to make, the first to assure a minimum “brine strength” (or saline concentration) and sugar content, the second for the nitrite addition. Water content varies in raw meat between 60 and 70 percent. When making brine, the amount of salt is measured not only for its concentration in the water of the brine, but also in the water of the meat as well. If the amount of salt added to the brine were based on a percentage by weight of the water in the brine alone, the meat would, in effect, dilute it. In order

to season the meat fully and to discourage the growth of bacteria, the brine strength should range between three to five percent salt in water. I use the average of 65 percent when considering the water-in-meat portion and, because I prefer more lightly salted meats, I add the minimum amount of salt to yield equilibrium brine strength of three percent. Sugar is added purely for its flavor-balancing effect on the salt at two percent and is calculated similarly.

For safety purposes it is important to make sure the meat is well chilled. The same applies to the water you use to make your brine, and the conditions of the refrigerator or cold room in which you are storing the meat. Ideally, meat, pickle, and refrigeration temperatures should not exceed 34 to 38°F at any point during the process.

I also observe the standard for nitrite addition, which is calculated in parts per million. The federal guidelines suggest an addition of 200 ppm for “immersion” cured meats. This level is based on the level for nitrite in the brine and in the meat at total equilibrium. This means that the quantity of nitrite is based on the total weight of the meat and the water in the brine.

For the sake of example, let’s say you want to brine-cure five pounds of boneless pork loin. Place the meat in a clean, nonreactive container large enough to hold it entirely submerged. Five-gallon plastic buckets are very handy for brining, as are square food-grade plastic Lexan containers available in restaurant supply stores. Determine how much water you must add to cover the meat by three inches by placing the meat in the container and pouring cold water over it, measuring as you go. For this example, three gallons of brine should be sufficient to fully immerse the meat. You would then calculate the amount of salt to add (the brine strength) as follows:

1 gallon of water weighs 8.33 pounds
Water weight of loins = 5 pounds x .65 = 3.25 pounds water
3 gallons water = 25 pounds (rounded)
Weight of water +water in meat = 25 + 3.25 = 28.25 pounds
28.25 pounds x .03 = .84 pound salt
28.25 pounds x .02 = .56 pound sugar

Once you know the weight of the meat and the weight of the brine, use this simple formula to arrive at the amount of curing salt needed.

Raw weight of the meat = 5 pounds
Weight of the water in the brine =
25.00 pounds water
.84 pound salt
.56 pound sugar
Total brine weight = 26.40 pounds

$$\text{Pounds Nitrite} = \frac{200 \text{ ppm} \times (\text{total brine weight} + \text{raw weight of the meat})}{1,000,000}$$

$$\text{Pounds Nitrite} = \frac{200 \times (26.4 \text{ pounds} + 5 \text{ pounds})}{1,000,000}$$

$$\text{Pounds Nitrite} = \frac{200 \times 31.4}{1,000,000}$$

$$\text{Pounds Nitrite} = .006 \text{ pure nitrite}$$

As noted above, sodium nitrite is commonly sold as a curing mix, a blend of common salt and nitrite. The nitrite content must be listed on the package; the curing mix I recommend is 6.25 percent pure nitrite. Because the formula above gives the percent in pure nitrite you will have to divide the amount of pure nitrite by the percentage of nitrite in your curing mix. To do this, express the percentage of nitrite in the cure mix as a decimal (move the decimal two places to the left) and divide the amount of pure nitrite needed by the percentage of the nitrite in the curing mix:

$$.006 / .0625 = .096 \text{ pounds curing mix}$$

With such a small amount, it will be necessary to convert to grams. There are 16 ounces in a pound and 28 grams in an ounce, so:

$$.096 \text{ pounds curing mix} \times 16 \text{ ounces} \times 28 \text{ grams} = 43 \text{ grams of curing mix}$$

For the sake of accuracy, I convert the salt and sugar to grams as well:

$$.84 \text{ pounds salt} = .84 \times 16 \text{ ounces} \times 28 \text{ grams} = 376 \text{ grams salt}$$

$$.56 \text{ pounds sugar} = .56 \times 16 \text{ ounces} \times 28 \text{ grams} = 251 \text{ grams sugar}$$

However, because a significant amount of salt comes along with the nitrite in your curing mix, you must deduct the amount from the total quantity called for. Again, assuming a curing mix that is 6.25 percent nitrite (and therefore 93.75 percent salt), calculate as follows:

$$43 \text{ grams of curing mix (6.25 percent nitrite)} - 3 \text{ grams of pure nitrite (rounded)} = 376 \text{ grams salt} - 40 \text{ grams} = 336 \text{ grams additional salt}$$

You are now ready to assemble the brine:

3 gallons ice-cold water
336 grams salt
251 grams sugar
43 grams curing mix

5 pounds boneless pork loin

You can make a spicy version of this brine for use in curing tongues, ears, and small cuts of meat. The percentages of salt and sugar are the same.

Source: *Cooking by Hand*, by Paul Bertolli (Clarkson Potter, 2003)



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A CONVERSATION WITH – Stephen Gerike

Is a pork chop always a pork chop? Stephen Gerike, Director of Foodservice Marketing for the National Pork Board, says no. With new common names for pork in the retail meat case approved this Spring, chops with names like Porterhouse, New York and ribeye are primed to make restaurant menus. Gerike believes operators can utilize the new nomenclature to position pork as a premium center-of-plate option.

A 23-year foodservice veteran, Gerike knows how to craft winning menus. Prior to joining the National Pork Board in 2000, he was Senior Manager of Brand Marketing at Sysco Corporation and headed up the kitchens of the historic Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz and the Annapolis Hotel. We sat down with Stephen to discuss the new vocabulary, how it was developed, and how operators can feature pork on menus.



NPB: Tell us about the philosophy behind the new names and the committee charged to create them. What was the committee's main goal?

Stephen Gerike:

There are two sets of specifications used in the meat industry to identify cuts of meat for all species.

The retail grocery trade uses Uniform Retail Meat Identity Standards (URMIS) that were developed in 1973 by the Industry-Wide Cooperative Meat Identification Standards Committee (ICMISC). This consumer-oriented identification system was developed to simplify and standardize the perplexing array of fresh meat cuts and names. The URMIS program, adopted by food stores, was seen as a promise to consumers that the same cut of meat would have the same name in every store in every city across the country. URMIS later led to the development of UPC codes for fresh meats.

The foodservice trade uses Institutional Meat Purchaser Specifications. The IMPS are a series of meat product specifications maintained by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) – a division of the USDA. They were developed as voluntary consensus specifications. The IMPS may be more recognizable to foodservice operators from the Meat Buyer's Guide (MBG). This is an online and printed pictorial version of the IMPS for all species.

We found a need to change the names used for many pork cuts because they confused consumers. Identification standards were designed for the meat industry and weren't consumer friendly. The idea was to engage ICMISC and the USDA to propose changes that would benefit all species as well as consumers.

NPB: What research was conducted to develop the new names? How were the names determined?

Stephen Gerike:



We brought several consumer focus groups together to understand fresh meat buying decisions at the meat case. We explored their awareness and understanding of packaging information, the current nomenclature, and *their* ideal fresh meat package. On the surface, consumers seem educated and confident, but as we dug deeper it was apparent they were confused. We found that many of the names or parts of names lack any meaning. Here are some revealing excerpts from the focus groups:

- “I don’t know what top means, but loin sounds familiar.”
- “Getting back to the pork shoulder arm picnic. I don’t know any animals that have arms.”
- “What’s mock tender? I wouldn’t buy that! Either it is or it isn’t tender.”

We learned that consumers gravitate to the familiar and only purchase cuts they already know. Here are some of their reasons:

- Inertia: “I won’t buy something I don’t know.”
- Don’t know how to prepare it: “I don’t know how to cook it, I’m not going to buy it.”
- Worry about wasting money: “I can’t afford to get something and not like it.”
- Fear of failure: “What if it doesn’t turn out right?”
- Disappointing family: “I usually buy the same two or three cuts. I know what I like, what my family likes.”

When we asked them what would be helpful, they told us they want to see specifics on labels: price, preparation, how long it should take, recipe ideas, weight of package, expiration date, safe handling instructions, the simplified name, nutritional information and degree of tenderness.

We developed new label concepts and tested them using eye tracking technology to develop the most effective label. Changing the names of the cuts was part of that project.

NPB: The new naming standards focus on the pork loin, why is this?

Stephen Gerike:

The names addressed in the pork category covered cuts from the shoulder and leg as well as the loin, but loin cuts provide the most opportunity to help consumers get what they’re looking for. This will help sales in retail grocery stores and restaurants – ultimately helping raise the price farmers can get for their pigs. Twelve different chops come from the pork loin and in the past we often sold them as assorted pork chops in one package or box. The cooking method for pork chops from each section of the loin is very different. Grouping them together does everyone a disservice, and there were some simple name changes we could make to remedy this.

Stephen Gerike: The chart below shows most of the common cuts that come from the pork loin. They are:

pork Be inspired



This message funded by America's Pork Producers and the Pork Checkoff.
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PORK checkoff

Sirloin Chops, both bone-in and boneless, are from the portion of the pork loin that meets the fresh leg on the hog. They are finely grained muscles that hold moisture and flavor very well. These are best served as cutlets, either sautéed or breaded and fried like schnitzel.

Porterhouse Chops are bone in chops that consist of loin muscle and the tenderloin. Cook them like a porterhouse steak – direct heat on a grill or under a broiler until medium rare.

T-Bone Chops, also bone in, consist of loin muscle and a smaller portion of the tenderloin tail. Cook them like a T-bone steak – direct heat on a grill or under a broiler until medium rare.

New York Chops are only available boneless. This is the loin, or longissimus muscle, that's opposite the tenderloin in both porterhouse and T-bone chops. Cook like a New York strip steak.

Center Cut Chops with the bone-in are similar to a New York strip steak or shell steak. They differ from the ribeye because there isn't any spinalis muscle or cap showing on the top of the chop.

Ribeye Chops, both bone-in and boneless, are from the rib portion of the loin and carry one or more of the loin back ribs on each chop, depending on thickness. Cook like a ribeye steak.

Country Chops and Country Style Ribs are available both bone-in and boneless. These are chops and rib portions from the loin nearest the shoulder end. They consist of many different muscles and must be cooked to medium rare or medium on direct heat. If overcooked, they must be braised for a long time until tender again.

Tenderloins, both whole and portioned into Tenderloin Medallions, can be cut in many different sizes and thicknesses. The tenderloin is pulled from the loin when a boneless loin is being fabricated. Once the tenderloin has been removed, the only cuts that can come from that area of the loin are New York chops.

NPB: The new names were originally created for retail cuts and labeling. Any impact on foodservice?

Stephen Gerike:



The new common names have been approved by the USDA for use in retail. The changes will be made to URMIS and UPC codes and are available through the Meatrack.com database for grocers to download into the scales that print labels for the meat case. The North American Meat Association (NAMA), the organization that prints the Meat Buyers Guide (MBG), is currently reviewing these changes. NAMA's pork section revision committee will recommend changes for the next printing of the MBG and the online version. These recommendations are also shared with the USDA to review and update the IMPS. This is an industry-wide effort to let consumers and foodservice operators see the same names for meat cuts. Restaurant operators can now use these names on the menu and consumers will be able to order using these descriptions in the near future.

NPB: Are you already seeing the new nomenclature on menus?

Stephen Gerike: Many of the new names, like Porterhouse and ribeye chops, have been used on menus for years. The benefit now is that consumers will be more familiar with the names from their meat case experiences. As the rest of these common names for pork chops become available in retail, consumers may be more willing to try dishes using the same descriptions on the menu since they will have a better understanding of what they are ordering.

NPB: As operators become more aware of the new names, should this change the way they prepare pork?

Stephen Gerike: The best approach is to cook pork chops as you would steak. Bone-in cuts are best cooked on direct heat and boneless cuts are best cooked on a grill or sauté pan. Train servers to ask how the customer would like it cooked – or better yet, ask them how they like their steak cooked and recommend a similar degree of doneness for the chop they are ordering. The USDA recommends cooking pork to an internal temperature of 145°F using an instant-read thermometer after a three-minute rest. This produces a medium rare chop with a warm, pink center. We'll talk to consumers about this as part of our roll-out of the new common names so they become more familiar with enjoying pork the same way they like steak. We recommend operators brine whole muscle chops to add moisture and flavor. Visit our website for more about brining <http://www.porkfoodservice.org/Foodservice/211/MenuingPork.aspx>.

This is a major shift in the meat industry and operators should take advantage. Pork supplies are abundant and prices are such that smart operators will profit by positioning chops as premium. Call out new common names and price your chops for profit. Menuing pork as the lowest cost option may not be a successful way to increase sales. Menu a nice, thick porterhouse chop and price it similar to your most popular steak – you will be surprised to see how sales and profits increase. Cook it like steak and customers will learn to love what we already know is so great about pork.



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RECIPES – Blackened Tomahawk Pork Chop Stuffed With Smoked Cornbread Stuffing

Ingredients

Blackened Tomahawk Pork Chop
2 DOUBLE TOMAHAWK PORK CHOPS
as needed blackening spice
1 teaspoon fennel
1 teaspoon mustard seed
1/2 teaspoon juniper berries
2 TBL salt
1 TBL ground black pepper
2 teaspoons sugar, granulated
Smoked Cornbread , (recipe follows)
Gumbo Z'Herbes , (recipe follows)



Smoked Cornbread

1 pound butter
4 eggs
2 cups buttermilk
3 cups cornmeal
1 cup a.p. flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1/4 cup sugar
1 TBL kosher salt

Gumbo Z'Herbes

2 pounds greens and herbs, (Collard greens, Mustard greens, Swiss chard, Kale, Bay leaves, Parsley, Basil, Rosemary, Thyme)
1/2 cup butter
1 cup a.p. flour
3 HAM HOCK, MEAT
5 shallots
4 cloves garlic
1 quart pork broth

Barley Risotto With Braised Rib Meat

1/2 CUP BACON FAT
1 medium onion, white, minced
5 cloves garlic, minced
5 cups barley
To taste kosher salt
To taste ground black pepper
AS NEEDED BRAISED PORK RIB MEAT , WARM

Jalapeño Gastrique

4 cups sugar
1 bottle hard cider
5 cups apple cider vinaigrette
5 medium red jalapenos, small dice
1 medium red onion, small dice
4 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup cilantro, chopped

Preparation

Cooking Directions

Blackened Tomahawk Pork Chop Method:

1. Blend spice mixture
2. Combine cornbread and Gumbo Z'Herbes to make the cornbread stuffing
3. Rub chops with spice mixture, stuff with cornbread stuffing
4. Sear chops and finish in oven until 140 degrees F

Smoked Cornbread Method:

1. In a cast iron skillet melt butter
2. Combine eggs and buttermilk
3. Combine dry ingredients in a separate bowl
4. Mix together egg mixture and dry ingredients, add melted butter last
5. Pour immediately into cast iron skillet, place in smoker for 20 minutes
6. Cook the cornbread in a pizza oven until done, roughly 15 minutes

Gumbo Z'Herbes Method:

1. Tear greens into bite size pieces (remove stalks/stems)
2. Make a brown roux with butter and flour, reserve
3. Sauté shallots, garlic, ham hock for 5 minutes
4. Add greens and cover with broth, simmer covered for 45 minutes
5. Combine with roux, season with salt and pepper

Barley Risotto with Braised Rib Meat Method:

1. Melt bacon fat in large sautoir; add onion and sauté until translucent. Add garlic
2. Add barley and 1/3 warm stock to cover; bring mixture to boil. Reduce heat and simmer until most of stock is absorbed, stirring frequently, about 5 minutes. Add remaining stock 1/3 at a time, allowing stock to be absorbed before adding more and stirring frequently until barley is tender
3. Stir in braised rib meat and season with salt and pepper.

Jalapeño Gastrique Method:

1. Reduce for one hour
2. Cool in ice bath
3. Fold in cilantro

Serving Suggestions

Serving Suggestions:

1. Serve with barley risotto (recipe follows), jalapeño gastrique (recipe follows) and sausage stuffed zucchini blossoms



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vol. 33 **BEST OF 2013**

RECIPE – All American Belly Burger

Ingredients

16 OZ PORK BELLY
2 Granny Smith apples, peeled and sliced
4 oz sharp Cheddar cheese, sliced
1 oz Rosemary mayonnaise, recipe follows
4 small hamburger buns

Rosemary Mayonnaise

1 TBL rosemary, finely chopped
2 cups mayonnaise, commercial



Preparation

Cooking Directions

Rosemary Mayonnaise:

1. Finely mince rosemary
2. Whisk rosemary into commercial mayonnaise

Belly Burgers:

1. Remove skin from belly and clean
2. Pulse in a food processor to six times
3. On a flat top cook burgers until 145 degrees F
4. Warm buns on griddle

Serving Suggestions

Assemble Burgers:

1. Spread rosemary mayonnaise on the insides of the both buns
2. Place the belly burgers on top of bottom bun, top with Cheddar and apples slices, cover with bun



the 400

DEC.
2013

Pork Foodservice news you need right now.

vol. 33 BEST OF 2013

MENU REPORT

Pork's popularity continues to grow and creative chefs are taking advantage with unique preparations. From barbecue rib sandwiches to gluten-free pizzas topped with pepperoni, sausage and mushrooms, pork is the perfect way to offer flavor and versatility to patrons. Take a look to see who's cooking with pork:



- McDonald's brought back the McRib. The offering features tangy barbecue sauce, slivered onions and tart pickles on a hoagie-style bun (12,157 units, HQ in Oak Brook, IL)
- Burger King introduced a BBQ Rib Sandwich featuring a juicy boneless rib patty, freshly cut onions, crisp pickles, and a sweet and tangy barbecue sauce served on a warm sesame bun (7,183 units, HQ in Miami, FL)
- Lenny's Sub Shop launched a Smoked Pork BBQ Sub. The hot sub features smoked pork, barbecue sauce and an optional coleslaw topping on oven-baked bread (150 units, HQ in Memphis, TN)
- Smith & Wollensky unveiled a Prix Fixe Liquid Lunch including a Samuel Adams beer, a choice of split-pea soup or soup du jour, and one of three signature braised entrees, including Cracklin' Pork – crispy pork shank with pineapple-mustard glaze, beer and apple sauerkraut (10 units, HQ in Boston, MA)



mushrooms, rustic pepperoni, spicy Italian sausage, torn basil, mozzarella cheese and wild oregano

- California Pizza Kitchen partnered with the Gluten Intolerance Group to launch a new line of gluten-free pizzas. Offerings include: (210 units, HQ in Playa Vista, CA)
 - Pepperoni, with rustic and spicy pepperoni, mozzarella, wild oregano and, at extra cost, optional white truffle oil
 - Mushroom Pepperoni Sausage, featuring cremini

- The Original BBQ Chicken Pizza, featuring barbecue sauce, smoked Gouda, red onions, cilantro and, at extra cost, optional Nueske's Applewood-smoked bacon
- IHOP unveiled the new Classic Ham Dinner, available from November 4 to January 1. The special includes a hickory-smoked ham glazed with a sweet caramel sauce, served with mashed potatoes and broccoli (1,537 units, HQ in Glendale, CA)
- Mellow Mushroom unveiled Bootleg Bacon Fest, a limited-time menu of bacon and pork dishes, including: (144 units, HQ in Atlanta, GA)
 - Don't Mind if I Dip – a cream-based dip flavored with crumbled



Italian sausage, artichoke hearts, tomatoes, caramelized onions and Montamoré cheese, garnished with sliced pepperoncinis, and served with pita crisps

- Wake-n-Bacon – pizza with an olive oil and garlic base topped with roasted asparagus, Applewood-smoked bacon, roasted mushroom trio (shiitake, button and portabella), Montamoré cheese, whole eggs, and chives
- Bubba's Bacon Bonanza – pizza with an olive oil and garlic base topped with Applewood-smoked bacon, honey-glazed ham, pulled pork, mozzarella and Cheddar cheeses, caramelized onions, barbecue sauce, cilantro and housemade pickled red onions
 - BLT Buckle – pizza dough topped with garlic aioli, crumbled Applewood-smoked bacon, mozzarella and Montamoré cheeses, romaine ribbons and diced tomatoes
 - Doublewide – sandwich made with pulled pork, Applewood-smoked bacon, sliced honey-glazed ham, mozzarella and Montamoré cheeses, housemade pickled red onions, cucumbers, and Dijonnaise on a French roll
- Village Inn rolled out new Down-Home Favorites including: (206 units, HQ in Nashville, TN)
 - Texas Turkey Stack – slices of slow-roasted, hand-carved turkey breast and two eggs on grilled Texas toast, covered with hearty pork, green chili, cheese and two slices of hickory-smoked bacon strips, served with a melon wedge
 - Denver Skillet – two eggs, diced ham, mushrooms, peppers and onions scrambled with pepper jack queso on country-style home fries, served with a side of buttermilk pancakes
 - Farmer's Skillet – hickory-smoked bacon, sausage links, diced red peppers and onions scrambled with two eggs, topped with cheese and country sausage gravy over a bed of country-style home fries, served with a side of buttermilk pancakes

- McAlister's Deli unveiled a line of Big Bold Sandwiches: (312 units, HQ in Ridgeland, MS)

- The Italian – Black Forest ham and salami topped with provolone, lettuce, tomatoes, red onions, bell peppers, black olives, Italian vinaigrette, salt, pepper and spicy brown mustard on a toasted baguette



- The King Club – Black Forest ham, turkey, Applewood-smoked bacon, Cheddar, Swiss, lettuce, tomatoes, honey mustard and light mayonnaise on ciabatta

- The Memphian – featuring Black Forest ham, Black Angus roast beef, and Butterball smoked turkey, topped with provolone, lettuce, tomatoes, light mayonnaise and spicy brown mustard on a toasted wheat hoagie

- Olive Garden is adding a burger to their menu – The Italiano Burger will be available at locations nationwide. The burger is made with a six-ounce meat patty topped with prosciutto, mozzarella cheese, arugula, marinated tomatoes and garlic aioli (803 units, HQ in Orlando, FL)

- Dunkin' Donuts added a new limited-time Spicy Smoked Sausage Breakfast Sandwich to its all-day menu. The offering features a split spicy sausage link with egg and American cheese, oven-toasted on an English muffin (7,306 units, HQ in Canton, MA)



- SONIC Drive-In rolled out a limited-time lineup of spicy foods, including: (3,556 units, HQ in Oklahoma City, OK)

- Southwest Chipotle

Breakfast Burrito – sausage, sliced onions, potato tots, fire-roasted red and green peppers and smoky chipotle sauce

- Island Fire SuperSONIC Cheeseburger – two beef patties, Cheddar and pepper jack cheeses, bacon, lettuce, tomato and habanero sauce on a toasted bun

- Freddy's features an all-new Pizza Style Steakburger for the holiday season this year. This burger is an Italian-inspired, classic Freddy's Steakburger topped with grilled pepperoni, melted mozzarella, savory marinara sauce, and grilled onions (83 units, HQ in Wichita, KS)
- Caribou Coffee returns the Maple Bacon Gruyere Sandwich for this year's seasonal holiday menu (486 units, HQ in Minneapolis, MN)
- Einstein Bros is offering a Cinnamon Toast Egg Panini with bacon (685 units, HQ in Lakewood, CO)

- Kings Family Restaurants introduced Meatloaf Cupcakes topped with bacon jam and frosted with mashed potatoes (32 units, HQ in McKeesport, PA)



the 400

DEC.
2013

Pork Foodservice news you need right now.

vol. 33 BEST OF 2013

WHAT'S HAPPENING – Project: Blackbird



The National Pork Board celebrates innovators who push foodculture further, and we're proud to present Project: Blackbird in partnership with Plate Magazine. Project: Blackbird is the story of four men, their vision and a look at one of the most influential restaurants in the country.

Over the last sixteen years, Chicago's Blackbird has emerged as one of the most significant restaurants in America. Chandra Ram, editor at Plate, spoke to more than 40 former employees, media and chefs about Blackbird to trace how one restaurant came to shape today's culinary landscape.

Go to <http://blackbird.plateonline.com/> to view Project: Blackbird.