



Pigs'-Ear Terrine with Sichuan Salsa Verde

SERVES 6 (WITH LEFTOVERS)

The first course at a Chinese banquet is more often than not a platter of cold appetizers called *leng pan*: steamed chicken, slices of lean beef, pickled jellyfish, century eggs, pickles, that sort of thing. It'll spin around on a lazy Susan, and people will pick off their favorite bits as it passes by. It's a surprising way to start a meal—refreshing and cool, but also chock-full of interesting textures and pungent flavors.

This terrine of braised pigs' ears suspended in gelatin is my homage to a *leng pan* platter. Pho spice bags—store-bought sachets filled with Vietnamese cinnamon, cloves, ginger, anise, and allspice—are a fantastic shortcut for imparting the ears with loads of flavor. The dressing is a cross between chimichurri and sauce gribiche—a classic French sauce with eggs, pickles, capers, and herbs—and it brings an herbal lift to the whole dish. Serve this alongside the [Shaved Pork Belly](#) for the full effect of a Chinese cold platter. Trust me, your friends and family will be warmed up for anything if you start them off with a plate of cold ears and belly.

Alternatively, if cold pork isn't your cup of tea, you could deep-fry the ears after they've been braised. The same sauce works just as well as a dip for crunchy pig parts.

Note: The ears must be salted overnight and the terrine must then be refrigerated overnight before serving.

Special equipment: 2 terrine molds or loaf pans (roughly 8 by 4 by 4 inches)

8 pigs' ears
Kosher salt
10 cups beef stock
1 pho spice bag (available at Asian markets and online)
1 teaspoon dried orange peel
1 bay leaf
1 to 2 teaspoons rice wine vinegar
1½ teaspoons powdered gelatin
¼ cup finely chopped fresh chives
¼ cup finely chopped fresh tarragon
1 carrot, finely diced
2 celery stalks, finely diced
¼ cup cooked chickpeas (canned is fine)
3 Belgian endives, halved lengthwise
Sichuan Green Peppercorn Salsa Verde (recipe follows)

1. Use a razor or blowtorch to scrape or scorch the hair from the ears, then rinse them thoroughly under cold running water. Put the ears in a container with a lid, salt them generously, cover, and refrigerate overnight.
2. The next day, braise the ears: Preheat the oven to 350°F.
3. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Rinse the pigs' ears again, then blanch them in the boiling water for 5 minutes. Drain and set aside.
4. Combine the beef stock, spice bag, orange peel, and bay leaf in a medium pot and bring to a simmer over high heat.
5. Spread the pigs' ears out in a Dutch oven or roasting pan. Cover with the pho-spiced broth, then lay a sheet of parchment paper on the surface of the liquid. Cover the pot with the lid or a double layer of foil. Pop the pan in the oven and braise for 3 to 4 hours, or until the pigs' ears are completely tender. If you pinch a thin part of an ear, your fingers should go all the way through it. Allow the ears to cool for 30 minutes in the hot broth.
6. Extract the ears from the braising liquid and set aside. Pour the braising liquid

into a saucepan, bring to a boil over high heat, and cook until the liquid has reduced by about half, until you have approximately 4 cups of liquid. Remove from the heat and taste, adjusting the seasoning with salt and the acidity with the rice wine vinegar as necessary—keep in mind that the broth will taste milder when cold.

7. Sprinkle the gelatin over ¼ cup cold water and let bloom for 5 minutes, then add to the pho-spiced broth, stirring to dissolve the gelatin. Let the broth cool to room temperature.
8. Skim off any fat from the cooled broth, then add the chives, tarragon, carrot, celery, and chickpeas and give everything a stir.
9. Line one terrine mold or loaf pan with plastic wrap, leaving a 4-inch overhang on each edge. Arrange a layer of pigs' ears in the mold, then scatter some vegetables on top. Add another layer of ears and veg, and repeat until you've stacked all the pigs' ears and vegetables in the mold. Top with enough cooled broth to almost reach the top layer of ears. Fold the overhanging plastic over the terrine, top with the second terrine mold, and lightly weigh it down with a few cans. The weight should compress the ears enough to bring the liquid completely over the ears. Refrigerate overnight.
10. To serve, carefully extract the terrine from its mold, using the plastic wrap to lift it out, and unwrap it. Cut it into ½-inch-thick slices and arrange on plates. Cozy half an endive next to each slice, and top with the salsa verde.

Sichuan Green Peppercorn Salsa Verde

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS