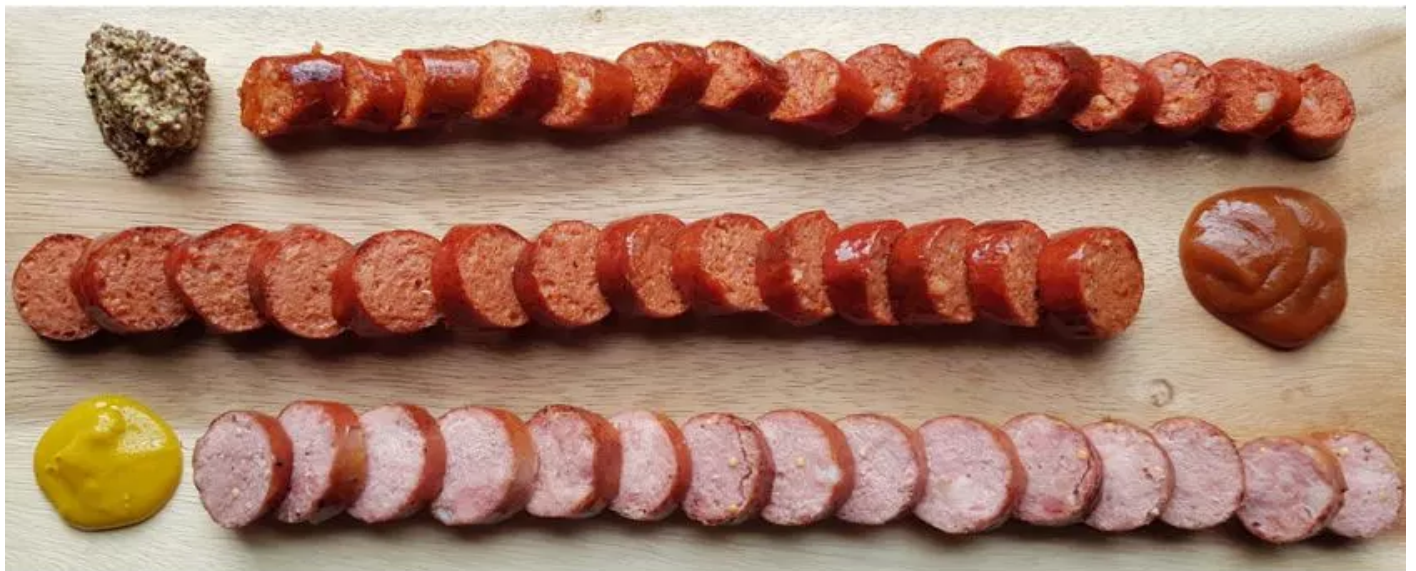


# Celebrate the Year of the Pig with a charcuterie board

Personalize a charcuterie board is by adding your own quick-pickled vegetables

JOANNE SASVARI Updated: February 9, 2019



Charcuterie from Oyama Sausage, from top: Debreceni (or Debrecener) sausage with grainy moutarde de Meaux; spicy bison smokie with German curry ketchup; and Polish slaska with Colman's mustard. *COURTESY OF OYAMA SAUSAGE*

According to the Chinese zodiac, the pig symbolizes wealth and good fortune. In the form of charcuterie, it means good luck for any host who has guests

arriving in a few hours—it is, after all, the easiest, more delicious way to feed a crowd.

Charcuterie is the centuries-old technique of curing meat (especially pork) by drying, smoking, salting, spicing, fermenting or confiting it. It was one of the earliest methods of preserving food; long before the days of refrigeration, a single pig could feed a family for a year, once it was transformed into ham, bacon, sausage or terrine.

Its origins may have been rustic, but today, charcuterie typically means a fancier type of cured meat, the kind that fills the display cases at Oyama Sausage on Granville Island. Founded by John and Christine van der Lieck more than 30 years ago in tiny Oyama, B.C., today the company produces more than 400 different products, ranging from toothsome saucisson sec to rich, buttery Belgian truffle pâté.

Truly, you could just serve a few slices of salami on a plate and be done with it. But assembling an appealing charcuterie plate, one that will feed both body and soul, takes a bit more strategy.

“Your empty charcuterie board is a blank canvas,” says Oyama’s co-owner Chris Halsey-Brandt. “It is far more visually appealing to have a variety of items than a mound of the same products.” After all, he points out, “Trying new and different foods is one of the great pleasures of life.”

He recommends creating an arrangement of dry- or salt-cured meats such as prosciutto, jamon, bresaola and the like, on a board or platter. Mix in some tangy salamis and rich pâtés or terrines. Then add cheeses, dried fruits, nuts, olives, mustards and pickles.

Offering a good variety ensures all your guests will find something they enjoy and is a good way to accommodate food sensitivities as well. Besides, Halsey-Brandt says, “All the different shapes, colours and textures will make your charcuterie board a gastronomical work of art.”

Oyama’s manager Jerome Dudicourt also suggests assembling themed boards such as these:

- French: saucisson sec, rosette de Lyon, jambon de Bayonness, pâté campagne and rillettes. Add-ons: cornichons, pickled onions and a wedge of brie.

- Italian: prosciutto, sopressatta and finocchiona. Add-ons: cheeses such as taleggio, pecorino or Parmigiano Reggiano, as well as olives and breadsticks.
- Spanish: chorizo de lomo, salchichon salami and serrano ham. Add-ons: manchego cheese, quince paste, marcona almonds and dried figs.
- Canadian: smoked wild boar prosciutto and Granville Island sake coppa. Add-ons: Canadian cheese, fresh fruit and dried apples.

Amazingly, all these incredible flavours and textures come from just one source: the endlessly versatile pig. Just add crackers and bread, and watch your hungry guests quickly become happy ones.

## **Recipe:**

### **Quick Pickled Vegetables**

One of the best ways to personalize a charcuterie board is by adding your own quick-pickled vegetables. No need to get out the canning pot—just keep these pickles chilled in the refrigerator and consume them within a month.

Makes 2 (500 mL) jars

- 1 lb (450 g) fresh vegetables, such as cucumbers, carrots, asparagus, baby beets, green beans, onions, cherry tomatoes
- Optional flavourings (see below)
- 1 cup (250 mL) white, cider or unflavoured rice vinegar
- 1 cup (250 mL) water
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) kosher salt or 2 tsp (10 mL) pickling salt
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) granulated sugar
- Wash and dry the jars, snap lids and rings.

Prepare the vegetables: Peel carrots, snip off the ends of beans, and cut veggies into whatever shapes and sizes you prefer.

Place flavourings in the jars (if using), then add the vegetables, packing them as tightly as you can without crushing them, and leaving ½ inch (1 cm) of head space.

Combine vinegar, water, salt and sugar in a small saucepan over medium-high heat to make a brine. Bring to a boil, stirring, and cook until salt and sugar have dissolved. Pour over the vegetables, filling each jar to within ½ inch (1 cm) of the top.