A recipe for Chicken Liver Pâté that is free from Campylobacter

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Ingredients:

568 ml (1 pint) of vinegar

450g (1lb) of chicken livers
(prefrozen and then thawed)

568 ml (1 pint) of milk

Two bay leaves

Five sprigs of fresh thyme

15g (½ oz) of boiled beetroot

Two cloves of garlic

120g of shallots

50ml (2 fluid oz) of
Brandy or Cognac

Five medium sized eggs

450g of spreadable butter

Salt and pepper

Method:

Step 1
There is no need to trim the livers to remove sinew or connective tissue. These types of preparations can contaminate the work area with campylobacters, which can then cross contaminate to other foods.

The livers are blended and passed through a sieve later in the recipe, which removes the connective tissue from the final product.

Step 2
Bruise two sprigs of thyme and tear a bay leaf into eight pieces and add them to a large oven-proof bowl. Crush one clove of garlic and roughly chop 50g of shallots (there is no need to peel either) and also add those to the bowl.

Thyme, bay, garlic and shallots contain natural antimicrobial compounds called essential oils, which can reduce the numbers of campylobacters present on chicken livers (but not eliminate them).

Add 15g (½ oz) of salt and the 568 ml of milk to the bowl and stir until the salt has dissolved.

Place the livers into the milk and transfer to a refrigerator to soak in the milk and herbs for at least one hour. Wash work surfaces with hot soapy water to clean any splashes of milk that landed on the surfaces when placing the livers. This includes disinfecting the kitchen sink, taps and surrounding areas, which may have been contaminated during the liver-washing step.

Splashes can potentially contain campylobacter and other harmful bacteria, which can cross contaminate other foods that may be consumed without cooking.

After the milk is removed from the refrigerator, it will be pink from the blood removed from the livers.

Blood can give the pâté a bitter taste.

(Step 2) Livers soaking in milk under refrigeration.

Method (cont):

Step 3
Using a sieve, separate the milk from the livers and allow the livers to drain for two minutes before rinsing them under a running tap to remove the last traces of milk. To prevent contamination of the kitchen environment, the bowl and sieve should be washed in hot, soapy water to remove any traces of milk.

Return the livers to the cleaned bowl.

As before, clean up any splashes with hot soapy water to ensure there is no cross contamination to other foods. Pour all of the vinegar onto the livers and allow them to soak for two minutes with occasional mixing to ensure all of the liver surfaces are exposed to the vinegar. Using a sieve, pour the vinegar off, and allow the livers to drain inside the sieve for two minutes.

The livers may look a little pale after the vinegar wash, but if you slice open one of the livers, it will show the colour change has affected only the outer surface of the liver.

If the livers are contaminated with campylobacters, the majority will be on the liver surface and the vinegar wash will remove a high proportion of any contamination that is present.

Step 4
Pre-heat the oven to 130°C.

Step 5
Peel and chop the remaining garlic and shallots. Melt 30g (1 oz) of butter in a pan and add the garlic, shallots and the leaves from two sprigs of thyme.

Cook for two or three minutes until the shallots soften and begin to turn brown.

Transfer the contents of the pan to the food processor.

Step 6
Add 400g of butter to the pan and set it on a low heat to melt the butter.

Spreadable butter contains a far lower percentage of saturated fat compared to traditional butter.

(Step 3)
Livers after soaking in milk before rinsing in tap water.

(Step 5)
Cooked garlic, shallots and the leaves from two sprigs of thyme.

(Step 6)
Melt, but do not oxidise (burn) the butter.

Method (cont):

Step 7
Wash the oven-proof bowl thoroughly, and return the livers to it. Add the cognac and mix the livers around to coat their surfaces with the alcohol before igniting the bowl contents using a blowtorch or the heat from a gas ring. Exposure to alcohol before ignition will also reduce the numbers of campylobacters on the livers, as will the heat generated by igniting the alcohol. After ignition, the remaining cognac components adds flavour to the livers.

Step 8
Transfer the livers and the beetroot into the food processor containing the softened shallots and herbs and commence blending. Add the five eggs, one at a time, over a period of five minutes whilst continuously blending.

Step 9
Add two teaspoons of salt and a teaspoon of freshly ground black pepper to the blending livers.

Step 10
Gradually add the 400g of melted butter to the processor over two or three minutes whilst blending continuously. If the butter is added too quickly, the fat may congeal and not disperse evenly through the blended livers.

Step 11
Line the base and sides of a one-litre volume terrine with greaseproof paper that has been softened by scrunching under a running tap. Leave an overlap of paper of a little larger than the width of the terrine.

Step 12
Boil a kettle of water for use in the Bain Marie.

Step 13
Transfer the blender contents into a fine mesh sieve (2 mm hole size or finer) and using the back of a ladle, push the livers through the sieve into the bowl. Connective tissue and sinew will be left behind in the sieve. Dis-pose of any remnants carefully and wash all equipment that has been used thoroughly in hot soapy water.

Step 14
Pour the bowl contents into the paper-lined terrine and fold the trailing end of greaseproof paper over the top of the pâté.

Place the terrine inside a roasting tray and place into the pre-heated oven. Fill the tray with boiling water to ¾ of the height of the terrine. It is important the water is boiling. Cover the roasting tray with a piece of loosely-wrapped aluminium foil.

(Step 7)
Rinse and drain the livers before adding the brandy and igniting.

(Step 8)
Cooked and prepared ingredients prior to blending.

Method (cont):

Cover the roasting tray with a piece of loosely-wrapped aluminium foil.

Step 15
Cook for 45 minutes then measure the temperature in the cen-tre of the pâté using a tempera-ture probe. If the temperature is hotter than 68°C, then the pâté is cooked and can be removed from the oven. If the centre is lower than 68°C, then return the pâté to the oven until the tem-perature in the centre hits 68°C.

Step 16
Remove the pâté from the Bain Marie and leave it to cool at room temperature for an hour before refrigerating overnight to harden the butter and firm up the pâté.

Step 17
Remove the greaseproof paper from the top of the pâté and place the terrine in a tray of boil-ing water for two minutes.

After two minutes, the pâté can be carefully lifted out of the terrine using the paper lining and placed on a chopping board.

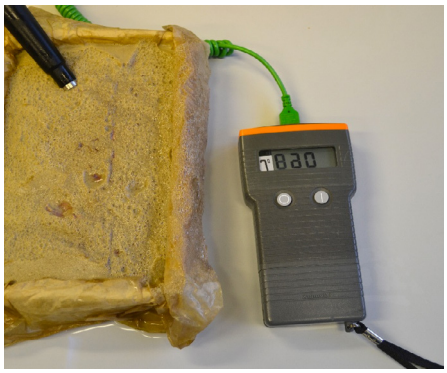
Step 18
The greaseproof paper can be removed by careful peeling and the pâté can be trimmed using a sharp knife to remove any discoloured (brown) areas.

Step 19
Once trimmed, the remaining butter should be melted with the leaves from the remain-ing thyme and some roughly crushed black peppers.

A pastry brush should be used to coat the pâté with a thin coating of the infused butter. The butter coating prevents the surface of the pâté from oxidis-ing and discolouring again.

Step 20
If it has been cooked according to the instructions and careful cleaning has been undertaken to prevent contaminated the kitch-en environment, the pâté will not contain any campylobacters.

Consequently, the pâté can be stored in a refrigerator at 4°C for up to five days. After five days, spoilage might become a concern and so if the pâté is required to be stored for longer periods, freezing is recommend-ed. Pâté that is cooked under controlled conditions in a Bain Marie to 68°C is pink inside and does not contain any Campylo-bacter bacteria that can cause food borne illness.



(Step 14)
A check of the temperature in the core of the pâté is important to make sure it is properly cooked and won't make people ill.

(Step 15)
Pâté that is cooked under controlled conditions in a Bain Marie to 68°C is pink inside and does not contain any Campylobacter bacteria that can cause food borne illness.