

## Home Sausage Making Class, Olde Towne Butcher, Fredericksburg VA

### *History of Sausage*

Sausage is derived from the Latin word *salsus* meaning salted and preserved. Sausage was first made out of necessity as a way to preserve meat since there was no refrigeration. Sausage has been around for about 3,000 years. Around 228 AD someone had a great idea and wrote a cook book and what do you think it had in it? Sausage recipes!! Today there are a lot of cook books on using sausage but not many that tell you how to make your own.

The discovery of various spices enhanced the flavor and aided in preserving the sausage. Spices became a huge trade item as demand grew. Christopher Columbus went looking for a quicker trade route to the orient for spices.

The sausage makers in small villages were developing their own distinctive types and flavor. There were many reasons why there were so many distinctive types of sausage, availability of ingredients, customs and climate were great influences. This was not lost on the American Indians. They had their own sausage that was made from chipped dried Buffalo and Venison meat mixed with dried berries and shaped into cakes to be eaten later in the year.

### *Kinds of Sausage*

#### **Fresh Sausage**

This is the kind we will be making today. It is sausage that is made from fresh uncured not smoked or cooked meats. It should be refrigerated and always cooked before serving.

#### **Fresh smoked Sausage**

Just as the name implies fresh sausage that has been smoked not cooked . This should also be cooked before serving.

#### **Cooked and Cooked Smoked Sausage**

These are cooked and are ready to be eaten. Some are eaten cold while others are heated up and served. These sausages should also be refrigerated.

#### **Dry and Semidry Sausage**

Made from selected meats and prepared in a more complicated manner than other types of sausage. The drying process must be very carefully controlled. These sausages are ready to eat and will keep a very long time.

### *Grinders*

There are many types of meat grinding equipment on the market today, from hand cranked grinders all the way up to the type we have here at Olde Towne Butcher and beyond. All of which will do the job. You don't even need a grinder, you can cube the meat by hand. When using a grinder it is the cutting plate that makes the difference. The size of the holes will determine what the sausage will look like and its texture. There are three main types we use for fresh sausage: Fine, Medium and Coarse. If your grinder has a stuffing spout or sausage horn you are ready to go. If your grinder is not equipped with this, you can use a kitchen funnel or even an angel food cake pan and spoon to stuff your casings. You can also buy a sausage press. There is a wide range of them on the market. If you use your grinder to fill the casings, don't forget to remove the plate and blade before you put the stuffing spout on.

## ***Preparing the Meat***

### **Pork**

For pork sausage the best and easiest cut of meat to use is the pork butt. It has the best balance of lean to fat ratio. It is about 28% fat. Most recipes will call for a 3 to 1 ratio of lean meat and fat. So just use a pork butt and you have it in one step. Quick and easy!!

### **Beef**

Again you should use the same cut from the beef that you used from the pork. In this case it is called the chuck. So just buy a chuck pot roast and you are using the same cut.

### **Veal**

Use the cheapest cut you can find. You will want to maintain the 3 to 1 ratio of lean to fat. The shoulder is going to be the best choice, if you can find it. You can make up veal fat with beef fat, or if you are doing a pork and veal mix you can add more pork fat to your mix. Remember sausage needs fat. If you make it too lean you will be disappointed.

## ***Grinding***

I cannot stress this point too much, *keep the meat cold!* After each step, put the meat in the freezer. We keep the knife, plate, head and the worm in our meat cooler when not in use. The first step in preparing the meat is to cube it. The smaller you cube the meat, the better you can pre-mix the seasonings. Make sure you remove the gland from the pork butt. If you don't, someone will get a bite of sausage with a bad taste. After the meat is all cut up, put it in the freezer while you mix the spices. When the spices are ready, bring your meat out of the freezer and sprinkle the spices in, mixing by hand as you go. At this point you will add water to your meat. Most recipes call for water or wine. If your recipe calls for water I recommend you use ice to keep it cool. If your recipe calls for wine you should use cold wine. So keeping that in mind, after you buy the wine for sausage put it in the refrigerator so it will be cold. The liquid is to help the meat marinate with the spices. Now again return the meat to the freezer while you get the grinder ready.

After grinding the meat, return the meat to the freezer while you get the sausage stuffer ready. If you are using the grinder to do the stuffing, remember to remove the plate and knife from the grinder. Next you will need to get the casing ready. Put your casing in cold clean water. This will take out the salt. OK, you are now ready to finish your sausage. Get your meat and spice mixture from the freezer and put it in your stuffer or back into the grinder. Open the end of your casing and bob it up and down in the water to force some water into the casing. This will lubricate the casing so you can get it on the horn, and it will come off as you fill it.

## ***Microorganisms***

Microorganisms are carried by many sources. They are everywhere, your pets, other people, and in the air. It is impossible to get rid of all of them. We can keep them to a minimum. Make sure your hands, your clothes, your equipment and work surfaces are all clean. Keep your work place uncluttered, don't let things stand around that flies would like. Microorganisms grow best at temperatures between 40 and 160. Anytime you have a moist protein above 40 degrees and under 160 you are growing bacteria and are risking food-borne illness. Don't make sausage in the heat of the day. The meat is to be kept cold. Work fast, if the meat warms up put it in the freezer to get it cold fast. Clean as you go. The point is to **get it done cold, clean, and fast.**