

The Idov Family's Chopped Beef Liver

By Alex Idov @ BourbonandSchmaltz.com

Like any good red-blooded Ashkenazi (nice) Jewish boy should, I have a great fondness for chopped beef liver, which is why I have never really understood the old adage, "Hey! What am I? Chopped Liver. Bring on the chopped liver. (Unless we're talking chicken livers, which I'll admit gross me out just a wee bit.) Of course, I have a certain affinity for my family's style of the Jewish deli favorite, which is a coarse blend of liver, sautéed onion, and hard-boiled eggs, and not the typical smooth and creamy pâté version that is more commonly prepared. This is accomplished by hand-grating the liver on a box grater as opposed to grinding it, a method taught to me by father who was taught it by his mother, who was taught by her mother, etc. etc. [*Cue Tevyeh.*] Of course, with the addition of more fat (schmaltz or oil), you can make the liver more pâté-like, if preferred.

Enjoy, y'all.

Meat Serves 8-10

- **Note #1:** As liver has a high blood content, salting it is not sufficient to draw out the blood, and can be koshered only through a detailed broiling process. Since liver is not considered fully kosher until it is properly broiled, un-broiled liver should not come into contact with any of your regular utensils and special utensils (a broiling pan, knife, and tongs) should be set aside especially for koshering liver. The pan and utensils are considered non-kosher and should not come into contact with other foods or utensils. I recommend washing the utensils in a utility sink or in the bathroom sink. Some kashruth authorities require that frozen liver be thawed completely prior to broiling to ensure it gets thoroughly cooked through. My family follows the opinion that allows for the liver to be broiled when frozen and we have never not had it become fully cooked through, and have found that broiling the liver when frozen helps to keep any blood from splattering. Check with your local kosher supervision agency or rabbi to ensure that whatever method you use complies with your community standards.
- **Note #2:** It is preferable to broil the liver on a heat source that is directly below the liver. If that is not feasible, one may broil liver from a heat source above the liver. Hence, it is permissible to broil liver in a broiler or in an electric oven, if that is the only broiling source available. This is my family's method for koshering liver. If the oven or broiler is used for kosher food as well, care should be taken to assure the blood does not splatter onto the oven or broiler cavity. Splattered blood will make the oven or broiler walls non-kosher. When broiling liver using an open flame (such as on a gas range), care should be taken to cover all sides around the flame with foil to catch any splattering blood.
- **Step #1:** Set oven broiler on high. Thoroughly rinse liver in cold water. Cut criss-cross cuts throughout the liver in various spots (this will help facilitate the flow of blood out of

the liver). If liver is of uniform thickness, this step need not be taken. Place liver cut-side down on a slatted/grated broiling pan. (The grate must be constructed in such a way that it does not inhibit the free flow of blood or other juices from the liver. The blood and juices should drip or run to a place where they have no further physical contact with the liver.) Lightly salt liver on both sides with kosher salt. This will aid in extracting the blood. (Unlike with other meats, salting is not compulsory when koshering liver, as the broiling process, alone, can properly kosher the liver. Therefore, if one is on a low-sodium diet, they may omit the salting step.

- **Step #2:** Broil the liver for about 6-8 minutes on each side, or until the outer juices have ceased flowing and the liver is dry on the outside (the liver need not be burnt). Remove from broiler/oven and rinse off under cold water three times in order to remove any blood found on the surface and any salt that may have absorbed blood. If these procedures have been followed, and red juice exudes from the liver interior, the liquid is not considered blood, and is permitted to be eaten. When the koshered liver is cut open, one may find the color of the interior is a shade of green, tan, light brown, pink, or deep brown. The only questionable color is deep brown, the color of un-koshered raw liver. This color indicates that the liver was not broiled thoroughly. The un-koshered deep brown part of the liver should be re-broiled or discarded.
- **Note #3:** After the liver has been broiled and koshered, it is considered like any other piece of kosher meat and can be fried or roasted in a kosher meat pot, pan, or roaster, without any reservation.

CHOPPED LIVER RECIPE

- 1 lb. Beef Liver
- 1lb. (about 8-10) Hard-Boiled Eggs
- 3/4 -1 lb. Yellow Onion, chopped
- Salt and Pepper, to taste
- Light Olive Oil

Sauté onion in a few tablespoons of olive oil for about 8-10 minutes, or until translucent and lightly browned. Set aside. Grate liver, followed by the hard-boiled eggs into a large bowl using the large-hole side of a box-grater. Add the sautéed onions and oil from the pan and mix to combine. Add more oil, if necessary, to help the liver stick together or if a smoother texture is desired. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Refrigerate for at least two hours prior to serving. -Note: Ingredients are variable; add onion as egg as suits your taste.

*Text adapted from Star-K.org/Rabbi Moshe Heinemann