



## seafood charcuterie

Seafood restaurants push palates while maximizing resources.

WORDS BY REBECCA TREON | STYLING BY CATRINE KELTY | PHOTOS BY KELLER + KELLER

Seafood is taking center stage on charcuterie boards, adding dimension to the standard cured meat, cheese, and pickle spreads. But the trend is about more than dazzling diners: chefs are revisiting heirloom recipes and using up fish parts that might ordinarily get tossed. Here are three seafood restaurants shaping the briny new trend.

Boston's Row 34 is a happy communion of clam shack, working man's oyster bar, and fine dining. To further set his restaurant apart from the city's many other oyster bar options, Chef Francisco Millan began offering a charcuterie board featuring items like smoked salmon, char lox, and bluefish pâté. "We wanted to highlight different curing methods and parts of the fish people may not have tried, and the smoked and cured board was a way to present that," says Millan.

The board can be ordered with a choice of four of the eight to ten cured items offered each night, or the items may be ordered à la carte. Intended for a group, the seafood comes accompanied by grilled bread, crème fraîche with chives, and in-house made pickles. The changing menu reflects seasonality and what's available, but smoked scallops, trout pâté, and smoked uni toast are regulars.

Making use of typically overlooked parts of fish not only cuts down on kitchen costs, but plays a part in sustainability, too. The fatty underbelly of salmon makes fabulous rillettes; the roasted head meat of a striped bass, cured with chili flakes, garlic, and olive oil, makes a delicious terrine.

In Brooklyn, Chef Adam Geringer-Dunn features inspired seafood charcuterie at his restaurant Greenpoint Fish & Lobster Company, highlighting under-utilized types of fish that don't have a reputation for being flavorful. "Hickory or olive wood smoking can produce a really rich, smoky flavor," says Geringer-Dunn. "We have been converting people to eating different types of fish by presenting it in different ways."

Another source of inspiration for Geringer-Dunn is his upbringing—some of the traditional recipes he grew up with in New Jersey and Cape Cod make an appearance on Greenpoint's charcuterie menu. He's recreated popular New England specialties like

bluefish pâté, now packaged in a dainty jar, to be served with toast points. Some of his other charcuterie options include smoked mussels in chili oil, Arctic char gravlax, and pastrami-cured salmon.

He'd also like to convert people to the strong, fishy flavors favored by Europeans. "Americans tend to like white and mild—as a whole, we don't have a palate for full-flavor fish like sardines, anchovies, and mackerel." Consuming these smaller fish and further diversifying the species we're eating will also promote sustainability. At Greenpoint, Geringer-Dunn serves smaller fish simply broiled and dressed with extra virgin olive oil and lemon. He's also a fan of high-quality tinned seafood from places like Portugal and Spain; pickled herring, anchovies, and sardines all have great health benefits, too.

Another Boston staple, Townsman, is helping reinvent the city's seafood scene. Chef Matt Jennings is always searching for new ways to use all of the seafood that comes into his kitchen, just as he strives to use all of the animal and vegetable parts. Jennings and his team are creating charcuterie recipes like lobster sausage and various fish pâtés using nothing but ingenuity and recipe testing. "We are constantly trying to perfect our technique," he says.

Townsman's charcuterie is presented not via a board, but rather in a three-tiered tower of seafood. The bottom holds a selection of fresh local shellfish over crushed ice, the center platter features breads and pickles, and the top tier is reserved for innovative concoctions like octopus chorizo, scallop mortadella, tuna conserva, and ceviche.

With all of these choices, it's easy to see why people are looking beyond the typical meat-based charcuterie boards and tuning into discovering new tastes in seafood. Says Jennings, "Seafood charcuterie is the next frontier."

## salmon lox

Recipe from Executive Chef Francisco Milan, Row 34, Boston.

1½ pounds salmon fillet, skin-on, bones removed  
 3 cups kosher salt  
 1½ cups sugar  
 ½ bunch fresh dill, washed and dried  
 ½ bunch fresh thyme, washed and dried  
 2 tablespoons black peppercorns  
 2 tablespoons fennel seeds  
 2 tablespoons coriander seeds  
 Zest from 3 lemons

1. Pat salmon completely dry.
2. In a small bowl, combine salt, sugar, herbs, spices, and zest.
3. Sprinkle ⅓ of salt mixture on a baking sheet. Press salmon skin-side down into salt mixture on baking sheet. Place remaining ⅔ of salt mixture on top and all around salmon, covering it completely. Wrap baking sheet with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 36-48 hours.
4. Remove salmon from refrigerator and remove as much salt mixture as possible with your hands. Rinse salmon under a steady stream of cold water to remove any remaining salt mixture (if necessary), but just enough to remove it. Rinsing the fish too much will remove a lot of its flavor.
5. Pat salmon dry and place it on a baking sheet lined with some paper towels. Place back in refrigerator to air-dry for an additional 24 hours.
6. After salmon has dried in refrigerator, it is ready to be served. When slicing, use a sharp knife and make very thin, horizontal slices about ⅛-inch thick. Serve with crackers or toast points, pickled vegetables, and crème fraîche.

Serves 4-6.

## scallop mortadella

Recipe from Chef Matt Jennings, Townsman, Boston.

Fatback is the upper side of a cut of pork and should be available from your local butcher. To blanch, cook it in boiling water for five minutes, until you can easily pierce it with a fork, and it has turned completely white.

1 sheet gelatin  
 ⅓ cup heavy cream  
 1 pound sea scallops  
 1 egg yolk  
 1 teaspoon salt  
 ¼ teaspoon nutmeg  
 ¼ teaspoon mace  
 2 ounces pistachios, blanched  
 2 ounces fatback, cubed and blanched

1. Place gelatin sheet in cream to bloom and set aside.
2. Remove any rough, crescent-shaped muscle from outside of scallops and discard. Pat scallops dry and place in a food processor along with egg yolk, cream and gelatin mixture, salt, nutmeg, and mace. Purée until well combined and a thick paste has formed. Transfer to a large stainless steel or non-reactive bowl over ice, and gently fold in pistachios and blanched fatback.
3. Roll mixture in plastic wrap, twisting shut at either end to create a log. Wrap several times in plastic wrap. Blanch log in gently simmering water for 20 minutes, or until internal temperature registers 130°F.
4. Allow to cool completely. Slice very thin and serve with pickles and toast.

Serves 6.

cook's note: You can also purée the scallops (in small batches) in a blender.