

NOSE TO TAIL Todd's Hog Breakdown

Head

The whole head can be used for charcuterie and soup projects down to skull art.

Ears & Snout

Can be braised down and chopped up to garnish a soup or salad or eaten whole as a sandwich with some condiments such as cheese, mustard, etc. Can also be air dried as a dog treat.

Jowls

A great cut to cure and air-dry to create Guanciale or smoked after curing to make jowl bacon. Super versatile in absorbing flavor and a delicate softer fat that makes it easy to render in a pan and make iconic pasta dishes like Carbonara. It can also be used to grind for a beef sausage or emulsified sausages.

Cheeks

The muscles that lie underneath the jowls, these tasty morsels are the prime delicacy of the pig head. Marinate or dry-rub these overnight and put them in a slow braise and shred into any dish.

Tongue

With a little bit of cleaning, this cut benefits with a simple brine of salt and sugar with any kind of aromatics in it. After brining, you can smoke, poach, sous vide, or bake and let cool after cooking to slice.

Pig Face

Can be taken off in one piece and stuffed, prepared as a heavily seasoned rolled meat, or broken down into smaller chunks and be prepared for head cheese.

Skull

After all the meat has been taken off, you can take the skull, break it down into four pieces, put it in a pot and boil or simmer it. The end result is to harvest everything that can be picked off the skull including the eyeballs, brains, and cartilage and heavily season it with a dash of vinegar to make a C-Loaf or Sulz.



Shoulder

This part of the pig is home for braising, roasting, curing, grinding, grilling, and smoking cuts. Separated from the pig in one piece, the entirety can be broken down into several cuts.

Shanks

Great to brine, smoke then braise to make a killer pulled pork sandwich. If you don't have a smoker, you can always salt the meat, make it into a braise with aromatics and either leave in one piece and enjoy on the bone or shred it off the bone and mix with any pastas or soups or other meals. Another great dish that can be done with these is known as Schweinhaxe. Beer braise these for a couple hours and then either roast them in the oven or shallow fry to get the skin nice and crispy.

Picnic

Slow roast this cut in a pan after a nice dry rub with the skin scored for a delicious roast! Can also be

prepared as a leaner pulled pork dish. To extend this product, it can be cured and turned into Tasso Ham (a spicy pork bouillon used in deep south dishes) or Speck (an air dried product similar to Prosciutto with the addition of cold smoke).

Boston Butt

This particular, forgiving cut is great for any method of cooking from sous viding to smoking. Give it a nice salt rub overnight with any of your favorite spices and cook it the next day, all day and prepare for a nice, succulent shredded pork. Can also be cut into thick steak and grilled as a whole piece over low embers. For beginner sausage makers, this cut has been proven as a go-to due to the nearly perfect ratio between lean meat and fat.



Fatback

This layer of fat is found on top of the Boston butt and ranges in different thickness per breed of pig. Salting this cut with your favorite aromatics can turn this piece into salt pork, salted fatback, or just fatback and used as a bouillon for soups and stews to bean dishes or sliced thinly and eaten with a hot biscuit. Lardo, a cured and air dried fatback, takes longer to make but is definitely worth the wait.

Collar

Also known as the pork neck, this cut can be roasted as a whole piece or cut into nice thick chops and grilled. This cut is also used to make the popular Coppa/Capocollo which is cured and air dried for months before eaten.

Barrel

This refers to the middle of the pig that consists of the loin and belly with the leaf lard and tenderloin.

Front Loin

This refers to the cut that has the rib bones still attached and has a similar shape to the beef ribeye. Cut into nice thick chops and pan sear, grill, or roast in the oven as a whole piece with the skin scored and studded with garlic cloves and bay leaves. If your chop has the skin on it, you can cut the skin with some fat left on it and cut it up into 1/2"-1" cubes and make cracklin' with these!

Back Loin

This part starts after the last rib on the loin and continues towards the sirloin on the pig. Perfect to make boneless chops to either stuff or cook as a leaner whole roast. This loin can also be used to make Schnitzel due to the symmetrical shape of the loin. If the tenderloin is still attached to the bone, you can cut these into porterhouse chops. You can also make Lonza with this cut, a cured air dried product.

Tenderloin

A nice lean cut that is great for a quick roast in the oven or grilled over some coals. Can also be transformed into an air dried product called Lomo.

Belly

Possibly the most forgiving cut on the pig when cooking. Can be roasted, smoked, grilled over low heat, sous vided, air fried, slow cooked, confit, and more. Most popular preparation with belly is making bacon, while other preparations include stuffing and roasting to braising and pan searing. This cut is also used to make Pancetta that can either be rolled tightly while it is drying or hanging flat.

Leaf Lard

This is the soft kidney fat that grows inside the pig around the lower back stomach.

This piece can be easily removed from the belly and rendered down to make lard used for pastries, seasoning your cast iron, pork butter, as a spread on toasted bread, an accompaniment to other charcuterie on your board, and a finishing touch on your pasta.

Leg

The posterior portion of the pig is home to a lot of lean cuts that can be used for roasts, lean trim for your sausage grind, and charcuterie items as well.

Sirloin

The upper part of the leg that can be slowly roasted or cut into 1" thick chops to pan sear or grill.

Ham

Literally in the name, this cut can be turned into the familiar smoked ham that we love to put into our sandwiches or poached and served with a Reising mustard sauce and roasted potatoes. This cut can provide up to four smaller cuts that are perfect if you're looking for modest roasts. For a costly and timely investment, you can turn the entire leg into prosciutto, or break it down into a smaller size for a petite prosciutto or traditional Black Forest Ham. With a grouping of muscles in the ham, you can also prepare a cured air dried product known as Culatello.

Hock

The bottom portion after the kneecap of the pig, this cut is similar to cook and prepare as the shank, just with a little bit more meat.

Feet

Great for making a super gelatinous stock or making gelatin (a lengthy process but can be done!). They can also be made into a midday snack after being braised and pan fried in a skillet. If you're willing, they can also be pickled!



Tail

A tasty treat that can be braised and shallow fried to enjoy by itself, or the meat can be picked off along with the skin and enjoyed with a salad or soup. They can also be roasted with the pork bones to help thicken your stock.

Bones

Gather these up and put into a roasting pan in a hot oven to cook to a golden brown color. Once achieved, put into a deep, high stock pot and fill with water at least two inches below the top. Bring to a boil and lower to a simmer for forty-eight hours. Strain the stock from the bones and enjoy this rich, gelatinous beauty in braises, sauces or even drink with some aromatics on a cold day. Depending on how much meat is left on the bones too, they can be treated the same way and made into a stock without the roasting and the meat and cartilage can be picked off and turned into Rillettes or seasoned potted meats to extend the pig.

Skins

Great to thicken stocks with or dried out to make dog treats. Can also be turned into Chicharrones after a lengthy but worthwhile project.

Heart

Can be ground and blended with either beef burger grinds or sausage/salami. It can also be stuffed and roasted or cubed, marinated, skewered, and cooked over coals.



Liver

Slice thinly about 1/2" thick, breaded, and enjoyed with some caramelized onions, ground and used to make cold cuts such as liverwurst, or blended into a Pâté. Can also be used to make a liver mousse. Recommend soaking in either water or milk to draw out any excess blood and impurities.

Kidneys

Similar to liver preparations but more limited in usage.

Caul Fat

The membrane that encases the intestines of the pig, this spider web looking beauty can be used to wrap anything from Pâtés to meatballs! This slowly renders and provides fat for any lean roasts as well.

The Co-op uses whole-animal practices for all our in-house butchery. This means we purchase whole animals from farmers and local meat distributors and use as much of the animal as possible for our meat cuts, recipes, and housemade products. We are committed to playing a positive role in a better food future and love talking with customers about our products and practices.

Visit the Co-op or our website anytime with questions.

