

Portland Foodie Finds
By Andrea Slonecker

A Choice Between Chops

I wait at the counter, observing Portland's most discerning home cooks place their orders of ground buffalo, miso-marinated pork cutlets, or osso bucco shanks. My eyes bobble back and forth between the white sheen of fat covering the duck confit and the twelve varieties of sausage from chicken and fig to spicy merguez lamb. Tuscan-style pancetta speckled with black pepper, rosemary, and dried chile stares me down, begging to be bought. I scurry to make a decision before it is my turn to order. With so much on offer, the task at hand is not easy.

But, Fridays and Saturdays are porchetta days. In my peripheral vision, the crisp, caramel-corn-hued pork skin is glistening under the heat lamp. At first sight of the mosaic inside the animal's loin—a filling of sausage seasoned with rosemary and garlic—my decision is made. The stuffed whole pig is rolled and tied, then roasted as it's been done in Italy for generations. I'll soon devour this delicacy between a ciabatta roll piled high with julienned iceberg, red onion, spicy peperoncini, and a glop of Dijon mixed with mayonnaise.

Step into City Market and look immediately to your left. The amazing selection of meat behind the long, refrigerated glass case is now the inventory of Chop Butchery and Charcuterie, the new venture by Paula Markus and Eric Finley, long time employees of the former Viande Meats and Sausages. Besides the new butchers' striped aprons, sleek logo and catchy name, the offerings haven't changed. Chop, too, provides home cooks with restaurant-quality cuts from local farms, artisan house-cured meats, and pâtés. With all the specialty meats available, to savor a slice of lardo or a sliver of foie gras is a difficult decision indeed.

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