

PROSCIUTTO

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Waiting is the hardest part

After hanging my ham from a water pipe in a corner of my basement, with the fly trap nearby and a digital hydrometer measuring humidity, I waited. By June, the mold made its appearance, and looked so gross that I sent Masciantonio an email asking him what to do.

"Absolutely nothing," he replied. "Mold is expected and welcome."

In July, when temps hit above 90 for days on end, more than a few classmates sent similar emails. More reassuring words from the master.

"With the weather being humid, and not a lot of scorching hot days yet, it is perfect conditions for mold to develop," he replied. "This is perfectly normal. Mold actually helps enhance the flavor, so just let it ride."

By mid-August, when the mold on my ham turned from white to a gross shade of green with tinges of black, I had my doubts. I was so concerned that I emailed a picture of the ham to Justin Severino of Salty Pork Bits for advice.

"That's not looking good," he replied. "At this

point all you can really do is wait until its estimated finish date and cut into it."

On the other hand, the ham still smelled sweet and peppery, even if I couldn't bring myself to touch it. So I figured, what the heck. It's a good story either way; let's see what happens at our final class in November.

In September, a group email advised us to rub some Crisco or lard under the ridge to stop air from over-drying the meat, with a post-script: "See everyone the Sunday prior to Thanksgiving."

A surprise ending

When I entered the club on Nov. 21, a few over-achievers were already carving their prosciuttos, confident the meat under the skin was a rosy and delicious pink. I had similar high hopes.

The day before, I'd scrubbed the moldy funk and

pepper off the outside of the ham with a wire brush, then soaked it in a tub of water for 24 hours to rehydrate the skin, making it easier to remove in class. It went from looking like something you'd find in the trash to something very possibly edible.

But first, I had to use a boning knife to remove a lot of that tough outer skin while leaving a layer of fat, along with the shin of the ham and the femur.

This time it was Frank Cafardi of Green Tree who came to my rescue, showing how to negotiate the hip joint with the knife and get the femur out by following the curve.

Greasy hands and a sharp knife are a bad combo, of course, and I ended up nicking my palm with the point. It was also harder than I thought to slice the meat; you have to really lean into it.

But lo and behold, when the first slices of my prosciutto finally fell away from the knife, it was perfectly pink and utterly delicious. "Gold," as Masciantonio might say.

Since prosciutto only lasts a few days in the fridge after being sliced, mine went in the freezer when I got home. It awaits a time when Cafardi — who also makes the wine handed out at Pennsylvania Macaroni during the holidays — can slice it for me on a commercial meat slicer.

In this world of instant gratification, it might seem hard to put up with a full nine months of uncertainty, worrying about flies and mice and rot. But that sense of accomplishment when I

first tasted the smooth, but-tery flavor of my homemade prosciutto? Definitely worth the wait!

CRISPY PROSCIUTTO CUPS WITH GOAT CHEESE MOUSSE

Prosciutto works in so many dishes — wrapped around melon slices, tucked between bread with cheese, as a topping with arugula on pizza, folded into pasta. As this elegant recipe demonstrates, it also makes for a quick and easy appetizer when baked to a crisp in a muffin tin and filled with a creamy goat cheese mousse. Perfectly sized for noshing, just

shape, bake and fill.

- 6 slices Prosciutto di Parma
- 3 1/2 ounces plain goat cheese, room temperature
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 1 tablespoon minced chives

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Cut prosciutto slices in half crosswise. Press each half slice into each cup of a mini-muffin pan. Bake for 8-10 minutes, until prosciutto cups are crispy.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl combine goat cheese with milk and chopped chives until creamy.

Remove prosciutto cups from oven and let cool. Pipe or spoon about 1 tablespoon of the goat cheese mousse into cooled cups.

Makes 12 appetizers.
— Parmacrown.com

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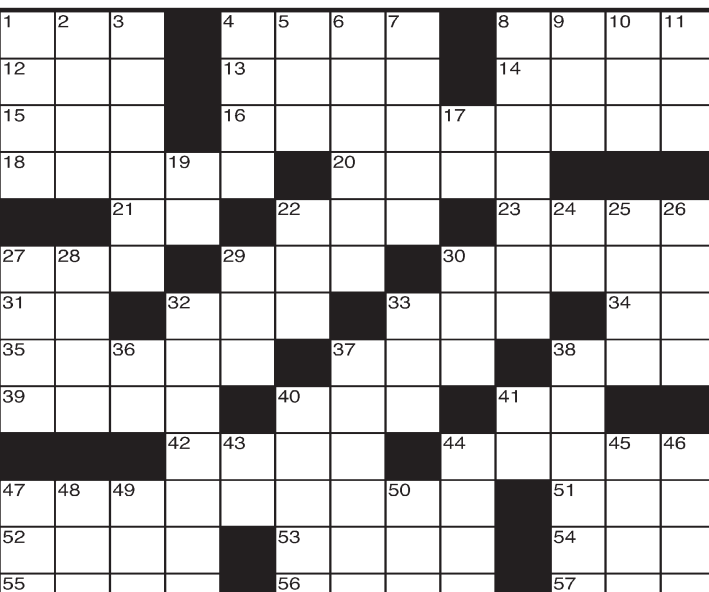
CROSSWORD PUZZLER

- ACROSS**
- Ref's cousin
 - Delighted
 - Changed hair color
 - None at all
 - Descartes or Coty
 - Tail end
 - Finish a cake
 - Lack of balance
 - Wind indicators
 - News
 - QB stat
 - Mr. Quayle
 - Transmission part
 - Bliss
 - Set (down)
 - Wild ducks
 - Is, in Ibiza
 - Hasty escape
 - Traipse
 - RCA product
 - Give the go-ahead
 - Elbow
 - Outperform
- DOWN**
- Academic inst.
 - Translucent mineral
 - Lots
 - Pate de foie —
 - French article
 - No matter what
 - Imp
 - Deepened, as a canal
 - Still
 - Auricle

Answer to Previous Puzzle

Y	A	M	A	H	A	B	S	E	E	K	
E	G	O	A	R	I	A	A	X	L	E	
L	A	R	C	H	R	I	F	F	K	G	
L	I	E	U	P	I	T	I	E	D		
S	N	P	A	L	E	S	T	I	D	A	
		A	F	T	E	R	B	A	N	D	
E	N	S	U	E	D	A	R	E	N	A	S
H	O	W	L	P	L	A	N	A			
S	R	A	T	A	H	I	T	I	O	K	
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C	O	R	E	N	E	A	P	E	N	E	
R	Y	E	S	T	R	I	O	W	E	D	

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- Like some humor
- Dr. Jekyll and — Hyde
- Newspaper exec
- Pond maker
- Pricing wd.
- Palo —
- Invitation addendum
- Film vamp — Harlow
- Kon-Tiki Museum site
- Regulation
- Soda-can opener
- Most drawn-out
- Hoedown honey
- and behold
- "Indeed," in Berlin
- Has confidence in
- Saddle horses
- Library warning
- Dodgers org.
- Dollar fraction
- Rome's fiddler
- Starr and Kyser
- "Pulp Fiction" name
- San Francisco hill
- Melancholy
- Avril follower

110 Announcements



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- Idle Hour
- Salvation Army

114 Self-Help Group Meetings

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541-805-2229
neo-na.org

AA MEETINGS
Wednesday Nights, 7-8:15pm.
Fort Union Grange Hall, corner of McAlister & Gekeler Lanes.
For more info, call 541-786-1222

AL-ANON
Keep Coming Back Family Group
Mondays, 7 pm
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NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
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at 8pm. Episcopal Church
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Info for **Baker City Meetings**
Call: 541-239-7323

114 Self-Help Group Meetings

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Baker City, OR
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AL-ANON Attitude of Gratitude.
Wednesdays, 12:15-1:30pm.
Faith Lutheran Church,
12th & Gekeler, La Grande
Please wear a mask & practice social distancing
541-786-2051

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Goin' Straight Group
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Episcopal Church Basement
2177 1st Street, Baker City

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Support for family & friends of Alcoholics
Tuesday evenings: 6-7pm
Joseph Methodist Church
(basement on northside)
Joseph, OR
Contact 541-398-1398

AL-ANON
Help for persons who have been affected by someone else's drinking
Saturday, 9 a.m.
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110 Announcements

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