

M.B.: We overshopped dramatically. And unless you're cooking from specific recipes or somehow lack the gene that causes you to worry about running out of food, this is inevitable, even wise. You can always —

S.S.: — eat the leftovers tomorrow. Another smart decision that we ended up making was to send people out to get seltzer. I'm not sure what it is, but bubbly water at the table is nice.

M.B.: When we first devised the menu, we decided pretty quickly that nothing required last-minute cooking. That also turned out to be smart.

S.S.: When you know that you're going to cook all day, you sometimes have to remind yourself to eat. As I was sliding pieces of the skin of the preserved lemons up under the skin of the birds, I kept looking at the chicken livers. I couldn't throw these out! So I sautéed them with butter and some softened chopped chipotle, mashed this all together and put the result in ramekins. Chilled in the fridge, then spread on little toasts, it was a perfect snack for us and our helpers.

M.B.: Normally, I would have started drinking wine when the hard stuff was over. But I knew it would take a lot of time to break down those lobsters and that we would be carving chickens in the middle of the meal.

S.S.: If you're the host of one of these things, it's a job.

M.B.: It's true. If you're used to drinking while you cook, you might think of taking it easier than usual. Don't start pounding Manhattans at 4 p.m.!

Chicken Liver on Toast

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 medium-size red onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 pound chicken livers, cleaned and trimmed
- 1 dried chipotle, softened in hot water and finely chopped
- 1 cup dry red wine
- Salt and black pepper to taste.

1. Melt the butter over medium heat in a large sauté pan. Add the onion and cook, stirring often, until it is soft but not brown, about 10 minutes. Add the chicken livers and chipotle and cook until the livers are lightly

browned, an additional 10 minutes or so. Add the wine, and cook until there are only a few tablespoons of liquid remaining, about 15 to 20 minutes.

2. Transfer the liver to a food processor and pulse until the sauce is blended and a little lumpy. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

3. Put the mixture into small ramekins and place, covered, in the refrigerator to cool and set.

4. Spread on grilled or toasted peasant bread.

Yield: 8 servings.

