

Scrap Iron Chef's Bacon

Recipe courtesy Alton Brown

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup salt
- 8 ounces molasses
- 1/2 gallon (2 quarts) water
- 1/2 gallon (2 quarts) apple cider
- 2 tablespoons course ground black pepper
- 1 (5 pound) piece raw pork belly from the lion end

Make a brine in a large non-reactive pot. Bring 1 quart of water, 1 cup of sugar, salt, and 8 ounces molasses to a boil. Stir to dissolve the sugar. Pour into a large container the remaining 1 quart of water, and the apple cider. Place in the refrigerator and cool to 40 degrees F.

Press the black pepper into the pork belly. Once the brine has cooled place the peppered pork belly into the mixture until completely submerged. Refrigerate for three days.

After three days have passed, remove the pork from the brine and pat dry with paper towels. Lay on a rack over a sheet pan and place in front of a fan for 1 hour to form a pellicle.

Hang, or put somehow, the pork bellies in the cooking section of a cold smoker and smoke for 4 to 6 hours. Alton pulled his when the Polder hit 80 degrees which happened to coincide at 6 hours. He indicated do not go above 80 degrees. He also basically made a smoker out of three adjacent cloths type lockers. The locker on the extreme right had an upside iron with a tin pan of wood chips sitting on it. The iron plugged in created enough heat to cause the chips to smoke. He then had from the bottom of the locker a 5 inch hole. From the middle locker he had Cloths dryer type venting tube connected to that hole and twisted and doubled, like spaghetti, with a length of probably 10 - 12 feet, all shoe-horned into the middle locker. He then had a hole in the middle locker, in the middle, that exited to the locker on the left. The one containing the hanging bacon slabs. He then from the left locker mounted a battery operated fan over the hole from the middle locker and pulled through the it the smoke from the right locker, or the smoker, into the left locker, the meat chamber. The reason for all of this is that the smoke had to be COLD. Passing through all the dryer ducting in the middle locker allowed smoke that entered hot to exit cold into the meat chamber.

Chill the meat in the freezer for 1 hour to stiffen for easy slicing into strips of bacon. Slice what you need and keep the remainder in a freezer safe bag in the refrigerator or freezer.

Place the strips of bacon onto a sheet pan fitted with a rack and place into a cold oven. Turn the oven to 400 degrees and cook for about 12 to 15 minutes, depending on how crispy you like your bacon. Remove from rack and drain on paper towels. Enjoy.

Yield: approximately 4 pounds of bacon

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 6 hours

Difficulty: Expert