

Home Cured Smokey Bacon



Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons black pepper, fresh ground
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- Freshly grated zest of 1 orange
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/3 cup maple syrup, good quality
- 1 large pork belly, boneless, rindless, about 3.5kg

Directions

To Cure the Pork Belly:

- Step 1 – Combine the pepper, salt, sugar, orange zest and cumin in a bowl. Add the maple syrup and stir to combine.
- Step 2 – Cut the pork belly in half if required. Place the pork into a zip-lock bag(s) and pour in the curing mixture.
- Step 3 – Press as much of the air out of the bag as possible and seal.
- Step 4 – Massage the curing mixture throughout the bag to distribute it evenly all over.
- Step 5 – Place the bag in the refrigerator and let the pork belly cure for at least 2 days. Flip the bag over after day 1 to cure top and bottom evenly.

To Smoke the Pork Belly:

- Step 1 – After curing, wash the curing mixture off the pork belly very carefully. Pat the pork belly dry with paper towel and set it on a wire rack. Allow the pork belly to air-dry, uncovered, in the refrigerator for 48 hours.
- Step 2 – Soak your wood chips in water for at least 1 hour prior to cooking – for bacon we recommend either hickory or apple wood chips. Prepare enough wood chips to fill your smoker twice, so they can be topped up during cooking when required.



Step 3 – Preheat the BBQ to 100°C, using the burner tubes only on one side of the BBQ. Remove the cooking grates from this side of the BBQ. Drain the wood chips and fill your smoker box. Place the smoker box in the BBQ, directly on top of the flavouriser bars covering the lit burner tubes. Close the BBQ lid.

Step 4 – Once the wood chips have started to smoke, roast the pork belly in the BBQ, away from the direct heat, with the lid closed, until it reaches an internal temperature of 60°C, or for around 3 hours. The meat should be cooked a little on the outside, but not all the way through. Top up the smoker box with additional wood chips if the original chips are burnt out and not producing smoke.

Step 5 – Once the internal temperature of 60°C has been reached, remove the bacon from the BBQ and allow it to come to room temperature on a wire rack, then tightly wrap in baking paper. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours, preferably overnight, before slicing as preferred and then cooking.

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