

"Drag Riders Pepper Sausage" (Dry-cured, Smoked)

I don't know about you but I fell in love with the taste of freshly cracked black peppercorns when I was only a couple of hours old! I hope you don't purchase that awful pre-ground black pepper that's been on your supermarket's spice shelf in a bottle since Betty Boop and running boards went out of style! Why not buy fresh black peppercorns from a reputable sausage supply house and crack them yourself or grind them inside an inexpensive spice grinder? You'll never eat the supermarket pepper again!

Oh yes, what is a "drag rider"? No, he's not a cowboy dressed up like a woman. He's the crusty ol' salty dog wearing a "wild rag" across his face while bringin' up the stragglers at the rear of the herd.

Ingredients

- 3 lbs. lean pork
- 6 lbs. lean beef
- 1 lb. pork backfat (frozen)
- 3 tblspns. powdered dextrose
- 7 tblspns. salt (not iodized)
- 1-1/2 tspns. garlic powder
- 1 tblspn. ground white pepper
- 3 tblspns. black peppercorns (cracked)
- 8 tblspns. corn syrup solids
- 2 level tspns. Cure #2
- beef middles or synthetic casings (3" dia.)

Chill the meat to 30°F. (-1°C.), and then grind the beef through a ¼" plate, then again using a 1/8" plate. Grind the pork through a 3/8" plate. Use a sharp knife to cut the frozen back fat into 3/8" dice and set it aside. Mix the remaining recipe ingredients with a little ice water, distributing it well throughout the meat as you mix the primary bind (sticky meat paste). Fold in the diced frozen fat and distribute it equally throughout the sausage. Pack the sausage tightly into a lug to eliminate any air pockets, cover it, and store the meat inside a cooler at 38°F. (3°C.) or inside your refrigerator a couple of days. Stuff the meat into beef middles about 3 inches in diameter in lengths of 20-24 inches. You may wish to tie off shorter lengths of your choice with twine. Another option is to use one of today's fine protein-lined artificial casings in 3" or 3-1/2" diameters.

Hang the sausages at room temperature for sixteen hours in relative humidity of 75% before cold-smoking them three days using light hickory smudge inside a smokehouse at only 80°F. (27°C.) in relative humidity of 75%. Finally, hang the sausage inside a curing room at 52°F. (11°C.) with 65% humidity for at least one month. Inspect the casings daily and wipe off any colored mold or gray mold with "whiskers", using a little vinegar on a cloth. Mold on sausage must be white in color and powder-flaked.

A safe and efficient "mold starter culture" is Bactoferm™ Mold 600 by Chr. Hansen in Denmark. Marketed in Germany, it was previously called M-EK-4 and contains spores of *penicillium nalgiovense* in a convenient freeze-dried form that stores well (frozen) for six months. It is very reasonably priced and available from most sausage equipment suppliers.

Good luck with your first "dry-cured" sausage all you smoke lovers! If you have questions, please don't hesitate to send me a PM. I surely don't know it all, but I can tell you how to bake a great biscuit! Be sure to pick up a copy of Stan and Adam Marianski's book, "The Art Of Making Fermented Sausages" published by Bookmagic LLC (www.book-magic.com)

Best Wishes,

Chuckwagon