

“Saddlebum’s Canadian Bacon” Brine Cured, Smoked, Pork Loin by Chuckwagon

Many meat products are soaked in saltwater brine with added nitrite. Often, up to fifteen percent of the meat’s weight in brine, is injected throughout the product to ensure complete distribution. One of the most popular meat products cured in this manner is Canadian Bacon which is not bacon at all... but delicious, tender “ham”! Pork loins are trimmed of their silver skin and excess fat, and cured in a strong saltwater solution containing Prague Powder #1. Ten percent of each loin’s weight is calculated and that much brine is injected into each loin. Very small “shots” are injected equally into several places in each loin. To determine the correct amount of brining solution to inject, simply weigh the meat. Move the decimal point one place to the left to determine the weight of ten per cent solution. In other words, if the meat weighs 15 pounds, inject 1.5 pounds of brine into the loins. Next, the loins are placed into the leftover brine and refrigerated. Note that it is most important to keep the temperature as near 38°F. (3°C.) as possible. Temperatures much above that point may enable the meat to begin spoiling; below that point, the cure’s effectiveness may be compromised.

- 10 lbs. pork loins
- 3 tblspns. Cure #1
- 4 qts. icewater
- ¾ cup powdered dextrose
- 1/2 cup salt

Following the fifth day brining, soak the loins in fresh, cold, water for an hour and then pat them dry with a paper towel. I like to roll Canadian Bacon in plenty of freshly cracked black peppercorns before they go into the smoker. The meat (and the pepper) is slowly smoke-roasted (about 5 hours) to an internal meat temperature of 150°F. (66°C.), making it one of the most delicious types of ham you may slide across your tongue!

“On the trail” without refrigeration, a portable cooler containing cubed ice or snow may be used to cover and keep the water and the loins as close to 38° F. (3° C.) as possible while the meat cures. As the ice melts, the solution becomes weaker and diluted as water is poured off each day. Compensation for the loss of salt and cure must be made by adding a teaspoon of Cure # 1 and two tablespoons salt, once a day on each of the last three days of curing. Be sure to completely dissolve the cure into the water just before adding more ice to the cooler to compensate for that which has melted. (If you are using snow, be sure to pack it inside a large, plastic, zip-lock type bag.) At the end of the fifth day, soak the loins in cold, clean, water for an hour. Dry the loins completely before smoking them. Lots of folks roll Canadian Bacon in yellow cornmeal rather than black pepper. They call it “peameal bacon”. Some misguided individuals and misunderstood souls even omit the smoking.

Best Wishes,
Chuckwagon