

Northstar Jalapeño Bacon

By Jim and Jean; Inspired by a recipe from Mike & Sherry Oliphant

This recipe produces bacon with the taste of the Jalapeños, but without the burn. My sons and I prefer a little more heat, so we added the Serrano peppers, and this gives us a mild burn to the lips and tongue. Both variations are fantastic and are a tasty change from Hickory or Maple smoked bacon.

Ingredients	Per 1000 grams	Per 2275 grams, (5 lbs) (about half a slab)
Pork Belly	1000 grams	2275 grams
Kosher salt	22 grams	51.2 grams
Cure #1 (120PPM)	1.9 grams	4.4 grams
Dextrose (Decrease by 30% if using sugar).	15 grams	34.1 grams
Jalapeños en escabeche (3 med. per kilo)	32 grams	73 grams
Jalapeño pickling liquid	28 grams	64 grams
fresh garlic	10 grams	22.8 grams
red onion (1/4 medium per kilo)	40 grams	91 grams
fresh cilantro (1/4 cup per kilo)	20 grams	45.5 grams
bay leaf 2 per Kilo	0.2 grams	0.4 grams
black peppercorns; cracked	7.7 grams	17.5 grams
Optional: for additional kick, add		
Serrano en escabeche (2-1/2 per kilo)	20 grams	45.5 grams
Serrano pickling liquid	22 grams	50 grams

Notes:

- 1: Cure time can be shorter if skin is removed first.
- 2: Jalapeños/Serrano en escabeche just means pickled, often with carrots and onions.

Process:

1. Trim pork belly to fit, and place into a large zip-top two-gallon bag.
2. Add all remaining ingredients to the bowl of a food processor. Process until smooth.
3. Fold bag top over and out to keep zipper free of mixture. Pour cure mixture into bag with the pork belly. Press out air, seal and distribute mixture over belly. Refrigerate, turning daily, for twelve to fourteen days.
4. After the twelfth day, if the belly feels firm, remove and rinse well. Pat dry with paper towels. Dry in refrigerator on inverted racks for one or two days.

5. Hang on bacon hooks or use smoker racks, and condition for 1 hour. Pre-heat smoker to 160°F. Place pork belly into smoker and reduce smoker temperature to 120°F. Continue drying for 1-2 hours, increasing temperature to 130°F after one hour. Introduce Alder smoke for up to six hours.

6. Continue baking pork belly two or more hours, increasing smoker temperature to 170° - 190°F until IMT reaches 135°F in the center. You may wish to add a drip pan to collect any rendered fat.

7. Remove bacon from the smoker and slice off the skin while still hot. Cool bacon to room temperature before refrigeration.

8. Seal bacon in plastic and refrigerate up to 10 days, or freeze. To serve, slice 1/8" thick and bake, pan-fry, or chop and add to beans or stews.