

ESPRESSO BROWN SUGAR BACON

Reverence Farm pork belly turned bacon – pork never tasted so good! Oh my gosh, I can't even on how incredible this is. There is NO nitrite curing salt in this recipe. The Reverence Farm love really shines here! Eating this fat is nothing short of the best thing in the world. We used an 8-pound belly, cut it as evenly as we could eye-ball it into thirds. Each third had ¼ cup brown sugar, 2 ½ tablespoons kosher salt, and 1 tablespoon ground black pepper, then we added a little something different to each. To date, we've only eaten the espresso flavored bacon, and can't wait to try the others. I'll update this recipe as soon as we get cooking them.

Adapted from a recipe by Cathy Barrow on Cooking.

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

2 ½ to 3-pound slab of pork belly, NO SKIN

Set 2

¼ cup light brown sugar

2 ½ tablespoons kosher salt

1 tablespoon ground black pepper

2 cloves minced garlic

2 shots of espresso, put in fridge to make cold

Tools: 2 Ziploc freezer bags, small wire rack and pan that will fit the rack, smoker

DIRECTIONS

Mix the brown sugar, salt, black pepper, and minced garlic all together in a small bowl.

Rinse pork belly and dry completely.

First, rub the **fat side of the belly** with the spice mixture, covering entirely and under any crevices. Turn the belly over so the meat side faces up. Drizzle the espresso over the meat, ensuring that the meat absorbs the espresso. Save any espresso that is not absorbed. Rub the meat side with the spice mixture, including the sides of the pork belly and between any crevices.

Place the seasoned pork in the Ziploc bag. Sprinkle in any remaining spice mix and espresso.

Squeeze out as much air as possible then seal the bag. Place in another Ziploc bag to prevent leakage.

Cure the belly for seven days in the fridge. Once a day, flip the belly over to the opposite side.

On the 8th day, unbag the cured belly and rinse thoroughly, removing as much of the surface seasoning as possible. Pat the pork belly dry.

Place a small rack in a shallow pan then put the belly on top of the rack. Leave UNCOVERED and air dry in the refrigerator for 24 hours.

Prepare smoker with your favorite wood, such as apple wood, and bring to 200 degrees Fahrenheit.

Smoke the belly till the internal temperature reaches 150 degrees Fahrenheit. This can take 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours.

Once the belly reaches 150 degrees, remove from the smoker and cool UNCOVERED on another wire rack at room temperature, about 70 degrees.

Once completely cooled, wrap snugly in non-stick baking parchment paper then wrap in a layer of heavy-duty foil – the parchment wrap is said to help develop the exterior of the bacon. Place in fridge overnight.

The next day, be ready for something extraordinary! Slice thin or thick, heat a pan on medium heat, fry to your liking. It will cook darker than store-bought bacon, but don't despair – it will be in part due to the espresso, the brown sugar, and the lack of nitrite-curing salt. The caramelization with the delicious fat is pure bliss!

Pour residual bacon drippings into a mason jar and keep in fridge. Use as needed to fry eggs, cook fried rice, or make homemade flour tortillas.