

CANDIED SMOKED SALMON RECIPE - Cormack Gates

I have used this recipe for more than 40 years with a Luhr Jensen Little Chief Smoker that continues to work well. The smoker has 3 racks, a collection tray for drippings, a six inch pan for wood chips and a single 3 inch burner. In cool weather I use a cardboard packing box over the smoker to maintain temperature during the smoking process (115 to 120 F°, 40 to 54 C°).

Ingredients

Amounts are based on two medium sized chum fillets. Adjust for larger amounts of fish.

Two salmon fillets, skinned and deboned, cut into 4 to 5 inch long pieces, no thicker than 1 inch

Coarse kosher salt: 2.5 tablespoons

Dark brown sugar (muscovada - rich toffee notes; or demarara): 2 cups

Fresh coarse ground pepper: 3 to 4 tablespoons depending on your taste

Four hand-crushed dry bay leaves

Methods

Step 1

Mix dry spices in a large shallow glass dish.

Roll pieces of fish in the dry mix, cover dish with saran wrap, and place dish in refrigerator.

The fish will start to make its own wet brine as water is extracted from the fish by the spices.

Mix fish and brine after one hour then place back in refrigerator.

Mix fish and brine twice more at two hour intervals, let sit in refrigerator over night and turn once more in the morning.

Let the fish sit in the brine for a couple of more hours before beginning the next step.

Step 2

Lightly rinse the pieces to remove bay leaf flakes, but not the pepper flakes. Don't overdo the rinsing.

Pat dry with paper towel.

Position pieces on smoker racks, leaving air space between them.

Put racks on cookie sheets and place open in refrigerator overnight to 'tack up'.

Step 3

Preheat (plug in) the smoker.

For a light to medium smoke flavor I use one pan of apple or hickory chips.

Place racked fish and full chip pan in the smoker and seal.

In cool weather surround the smoker with a blanket or cardboard box to keep heat around 40 to 54 C°.

Some like to remove the chip pan once the wood is fully burned. I do not find this makes a difference.

Look at the fish after 4.5 to 5 hours to determine if it is done (dry) enough to be removed. Taste a piece and leave it in the smoker longer if necessary. I like a dry surface and moist inside.

Remove the fish and place in brown paper lunch bags to remove oil drippings and excess moisture.

Store finished product in the refrigerator and keep in the paper bags until you are satisfied no more surface oil remains.

Sockeye, and chinook have more fat content than other Pacific salmon species.

The smoked fish will keep refrigerated for a week or a little longer.