



BASIC WILTSHIRE BRINE CURE FOR BACON

Belly pork cured with this brine makes lovely green (unsmoked) streaky bacon. The meat must be completely immersed in the brine.

Ingredients

1.5k salt
3 litres of beer (preferably dark)
1k black treacle or molasses
20-30 juniper berries (I slightly crush mine first)
30g black peppercorns crushed

Method

Boil all ingredients together in a pan for about 10 minutes, leave to cool. I use fairly flat plastic brine tubs for my pork putting a large belly in each one. You can just use a large lidded tub and weigh the meat down. It's important that it is totally submerged. Leave the meat in the brine for 2 to 4 days for each kilo turning each day. The maximum time of 4 days is for a leg/ham that you intend to keep a long time the minimum of 2 days for a belly of pork will be enough if you intend to cook and eat it or freeze it soon after it is finished curing. I can keep 4 of my brine boxes in the bottom of the fridge which is ideal, if your piece of meat (such as a hock or leg) is too big you can put it into a larger container and use the frozen blue ice coolers to keep the liquid cool, refreeze and change them every day.

After the allotted time remove from the cure and wipe clean, hang each belly in a cool, well-ventilated place for at least 24 hours, I usually hang mine for at least 2-3 days if I'm not smoking them. Put them inside a cotton pillow case if you are worried about flies. You can either finely slice and fry to go with your sausages, egg and tomatoes or see below.

Notes

Bellies cured like this can also be cut into chunks and used in stews and casseroles for extra flavour. Larger, squarer pieces can be boiled whole with stock and vegetables and eaten hot or cold.