

CURED SALMON

Serves 10

Recipe by Paul Brunner, as featured in "BC Wine Lover's Cookbook"

1 pound sushi-grade or previously frozen, wild salmon fillet, de-boned and washed with skin on
½ cup sea salt

½ cup raw Demerara sugar

½ tablespoon cinnamon

½ tablespoon black or Szechuan peppercorns, crushed

1 orange, thinly sliced

½ bunch fresh dill, chopped

1 jalapeño pepper, cut in half, seeded and finely chopped

½ fennel bulb, finely chopped

Line the larger of the two Pyrex dishes with enough plastic wrap to wrap around the fish.

In a bowl, thoroughly mix the salt, sugar, cinnamon and crushed pepper.

Lay the salmon fillet on top of the plastic wrap in the Pyrex dish, skin side down. Place the oranges on top of the salmon and top with the dill, jalapeño slices and fennel.

Cover with a generous amount of the salt/sugar mixture, making sure to also coat the ends and sides of the fish. Pull the plastic wrap tightly around the entire fish to seal it in a cocoon. Place the smaller Pyrex dish on top of the wrapped salmon and fill it with the weights.

Move the stack of dishes to the refrigerator and leave the salmon to cure for 48 hours, discarding the liquid and flipping the fish over every 12 hours.

After 48 hours, take the fish out of the fridge. Remove the plastic wrap and discard the seasoning ingredients, then rinse the fish well to remove any remaining salt. Pat it dry with clean paper towels. Place the fish on a cookie sheet, uncovered, and return to the refrigerator to rest for 24 hours.

When ready to serve, slice into thin pieces with an extra-sharp knife and serve with bagels and cream cheese, or on a platter with crostini. If you are not going to serve immediately, wrap it with plastic wrap and save in the fridge for up to 10 days.

PAUL BRUNNER'S FETA CHEESE IN OLIVE OIL RECIPE

Blue Grouse Estate Winery, Cowichan Valley, British Columbia

The backstory is that I bought some feta cheese marinated in olive oil from a deli and thought I could do better. I have been doing my own ever since. It lasts only a few days in our house, as we use it on everything, but in particular salmon and as a garnish for salads.

The measurements are not exact, because it depends on how much you want to make. This is what I would recommend:

PREPARATION TIME:

The preparation takes approximately 30 minutes from start until the marinade is ready for the refrigerator.

EQUIPMENT:

Cutting board(s).

A very good chopping knife.

A Pyrex container that will hold to 1 litre of liquid, with a lid that clips on top and will not leak.
Some bowls (small to very small) to hold the ingredients while in preparation.

INGREDIENTS:

0.5 to 1 kilo of feta cheese (depends on how much you want to make) – use high quality feta (it makes a difference). I have used sheep feta from Greece, goat feta from France and many local artisanal fetas. I have found that locally available, large volume feta from the big chain stores does not deliver the necessary flavour profile.

1 – bottle of good quality olive oil.

1 – pepper grinder (note – do not add salt. The feta is salty enough and the addition of salt will ruin the dish – comes from experience).

1 – shaker of Herbs of Provence. You can make your own herb blend, but I have found that the off the shelf Herbs of Provence add a nice flavour profile and they are easy to get in any grocery store. (when in season, in addition to the Herbs of Provence, I go to my garden and cut whatever fresh herbs I can find and add them).

1 – garlic bulb (you will use 4 to 8 cloves depending on the quantity of feta and your taste for garlic).

1 – large(ish) jalapeno pepper.

INSTRUCTION:**Process 1:**

Finely chop your garlic cloves and place them in a small dish.

Cut the stem off of your jalapeno pepper and then cut it length wise into quarters. Remove all the seeds and veins – you want a light flavour not heat. Finely chop your jalapeno and place it into a small dish. I

would use about half the jalapeno, but it is a matter of preference.

If you are using your own herbs, chop them finely and place them in a small dish.

Process 2:

Take your Pyrex container and lightly cover the bottom with ground pepper using the grinder, then

place a thin layer of your Herbs of Provence + your fresh herbs. Add about 0.5 to 1 teaspoon of chopped

garlic and a smaller amount of your chopped jalapeno. Cover the ingredients with your olive oil and swirl

it around a bit.

Now carefully cut your block(s) of feta into small squares a bit bigger than 1/4" X 1/4" (~0.7 cm X 0.7 cm if you are so inclined). You need enough to cover the bottom of the Pyrex dish two layers deep. Repeat the process above by adding another layer of ground pepper, the Herbs of Provence, a bit of garlic, some jalapeno and more olive oil until the feta is nearly covered.

Continue adding layers of feta, ground pepper, Herbs of Provence, a bit of garlic, some jalapeno and olive oil until your Pyrex container is almost full (use common sense). Note that the feta will settle and so I recommend you stop your oil at about a finger's width+ below the top of the feta.

Process 3:

Once your Pyrex dish is full put the lid on (it better not leak) and gently swirl the contents around (sideways, upside down every which way). Note you want chunks of feta not purée. The feta mix is now ready to go into the refrigerator to marinate.

I like to marinate the feta for about a week before using it, but shorter periods are okay (not less than about 3 days though in my opinion).

In the refrigerator the olive oil will coagulate and become semi-solid. In order to ensure you get a good marinade, remove the Pyrex dish from the refrigerator daily, let the olive oil liquefy and then swirl it and leave it turned upside down on the counter for a few hours, so that all of the feta is covered and gets exposed to the mix. Put it back in the refrigerator – (I suggest you rotate the Pyrex container one time right side up, the next time upside down, in the fridge. You want lots of flavour on everything – again the container better not leak)!!!

After repeating the “mixing” process for about a week it is ready to use. In my house, even large quantities do not last long, cuz we use it on everything. However, if refrigerated, it will last at least two weeks, probably more. Enjoy!!