

Smoked Kokanee (Wet Brine)

Ingredients

- 15-20 skinned and de-boned kokanee fillets
- 16 cups water
- 4 cups dark brown sugar
- 1/2 cup non-iodized salt (canning, pickling or kosher salt)
- 4 table spoons garlic powder
- Coarse Black Pepper
- Olive Oil

Preparation

1. Rinse the fillets with cold water and pat dry with paper towels.
2. Boil the water and combine all ingredients (besides the kokanee) in a non-reactive (non-metallic) container. Stir and allow cool.
3. Add the kokanee.
4. Cover the container and put in the fridge overnight.
5. Coat the smoking racks with olive oil.
6. Remove fillets from the brine and put them on the racks without rinsing for drying them.
7. Allow fillets to form a shiny glaze (pellicle) before smoking. Some people put a fan on them to help dry them out.
8. Sprinkle with coarse black pepper if desired.

Cooking

Smoke the fish in a low temperature electric smoker for 2-6 hours depending on thickness and temperature. Use one pan of alder chunks for a light smoky flavor.

- Start out at 120 degrees for about 2 hours to remove the moisture. (Warning: if you increase the heat too fast you will get an unwanted 'curd' layer at the top of the fillets.)
- Then up the temperature to 150 degrees until the fish is done to your liking (usually about 1-2 more hours for myself).
- Next, sanitize the fish at 220 degrees for 20 minutes to kill off any bacteria or parasites. You can do this stage in the smoker, or do like I do and finish it off in the oven. The internal temperature of the thickest piece needs to reach 160 degrees for at least 20 minutes to make the fish safe to eat.
- Finally, allow the fish to rest at room temperature for about 20 minutes.

Storing

Wrap the fish in paper towels and keep it in the refrigerator when it's not being enjoyed. It will keep this way for about 14 days. For long term storage, vacuum seal and freeze the fish immediately after it cools. Fish stored this way will last four months.