

Give Smokers A Try

If someone suggests to you that you should take up smoking as a hobby, it may be that they're not talking about cigarettes at all, but the process of smoking, which is used to add flavor to foods. There are different methods of smoking, but all are, of course, centered around the use of burning wood or other plant materials in order to produce smoke. If you've ever sat around a campfire for a while and come home with your clothes smelling like that fire, you know that using smokers to cook is an effective way to impart scents and flavors into food.

Hot Smoking

Hot smokers ensure that the smoke coming from the burned material is still hot as it passes over the meat. Just as when you steam vegetables, the heat carried in the air will cook the food, while the smoke will impart flavors. To do this, the food is either held over a fire or it is placed in a sort of enclosed area with the fire. If this sounds familiar to the process of barbecuing meat, that's because barbecuing is a hot smoking method. This technique originated in the Caribbean and is now popular all over the world, particularly in the American South, where barbecue pork is a specialty.

Cold Smoking

When you cold smoke something, you place it in an enclosure that is kept separate from the fire. Contrary to the name of the technique, this often requires that the food is kept at room temperature. Cold smokers have some way to allow the smoke to cool down before it is blown to the food, all of the flavor of the smoke but none of the heat is imparted. However, because the food is not cooked at a high temperature at this time, this method is most often combined with salt curing, and gives us foods like smoked ham, bacon, or lox. This process is long and can take hours or even days to complete the smoking process.

For Preservation

While smoking is a cooking method, it has also been used as a method of preservation. As mentioned, when combined with salting and curing meat, using smokers results in foods that, instead of being highly perishable, can instead be kept for very long periods of time.

The curing process helps to bring salt into the meat, which creates an environment where bacteria can't grow and spoil the food, and the smoking method helps to dry the meat, adding to the curing process, and also gives the surface of the meat additional protection from microbes.

This was such a common process that western farms often had smokehouses just for the preservation and curing of meat. However, whether you're interested in smokers in order to preserve food or just to add some great flavor, you're starting in on a winning hobby that will allow you to create tastier food than before.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

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