

# DIY Meat Curing Chamber

This project will involve creating the right conditions to simulate an ideal outdoor climate for meat curing. You will need to maintain constant temperature and humidity for your meat. In order to do this you will require the following;

- Wine Cooler (with digital temperature control and fan)
- Humidifier
- Hygrostat (terrarium climate control)

We used a wine cooler with a digital thermostat, this allows greater control of temperature. Also wine coolers typically feature fans which are essential to create the airflow needed to cure the meat at a constant rate. Remember we are trying to create the ideal climate.



A humidifier is placed inside the wine cooler to maintain required humidity.



The humidifier is connected to a hygrostat which is used to switch the humidifier on or off at the appropriate time when humidity is too low. You will now be able to maintain a constant temperature inside your wine cooler, as well as constant humidity.

## End User Notice

Because all different cuts of meat require a different process to cure, we strongly advise you research the best method for your chosen cut. Before using any electrical appliances involved, ensure you get a qualified electrician to approve your setup. As with all home cooking please ensure food is prepared and handled in a hygienic and clean environment.

## DIY Charcuterie

### **Prosciutto di Anatra (cured duck breasts)**

Place orange peel of at least one orange and of any thickness inside a storage jar along with some salt (curing salt is best) and leave to infuse for several days.

Then applying 18g - 20g of orange salt per kilo of total weight of duck meat (breasts), massage thoroughly before placing them individually into ziplock style freezer bags and place in your fridge for 3 days. After 3 days take out your duck breasts and pat dry with some paper towel before piercing the duck breast and tying string through the hole to hang up to air-dry for a further 3 days (hanging for longer will improve flavour). Once air-dried slice thinly and use cold in a salad or sauté quickly and use as duck bacon.

### **Coppa Ham (cured & air-dried neck muscle of pork)**

First quarter some whole lemons and place in a storage jar with layers of salt for at least 3 weeks or until the lemons turn a khaki colour. Ask your butcher for the neck & shoulder muscle of pork weighing approximately 2-3kg and dry cure it with the lemon salt (you can use your cured lemons in lamb tagine cooking or finely chopped in a mackerel pate) using a ratio of 30 - 40grams per kilo of meat used, rub well into the meat including all the nooks and crannies ensuring all the surface of the meat is salted. Once salted place your neck muscle into a large plastic bag and squeeze as much air out as you possibly can before tying it closed with string, you can at this stage use Archimedes method (not sure about spelling) by inserting your plastic bag including your meat into a bucket of water to aid dispelling the air from within the bag, then tie off with string. Make a note of the start weight of your piece of meat and label your bag with the information along with the date and what it is.

Place the closed bag into your fridge for 3 weeks, (remembering the coldest place is at the bottom) turn daily for the 3 week period to help equalise the curing process. Avoid any fridge temperature less than 2c degrees as this may slow down the curing process or even draw it to a halt, running your fridge at 4c degrees is best.

After the curing time has lapsed, take out the Coppa ham and pat it dry with paper towel (do not rinse any excess salt off with water, use only the paper towel). Once patted dry place your meat inside some muslin or cheesecloth whilst tying both ends off with string then hang to air-dry. In order to air-dry your Coppa ham safely, the environment it is stored must be at a temperature of between 12c – 15c degrees and with a relative humidity of 70% - 80%, this can be achieved by using a wine fridge set to the temperature along with a small de-humidifier set to stabilise the humidity. Your Coppa ham will be ready and at it's best once it has lost approximately 30% in weight, albeit some people prefer to start eating it after 25% weight loss.

### **Bresaola (cured & air-dried muscle of beef)**

Bresaola can be made with many types of beef cuts, however the most economical cut is silverside. You must remove all fat, sinew and any blue-skin from the meat before curing your beef with salt (curing salt is best) again using a ratio of 30 – 40grams per kilo of meat. Follow procedures as with the Coppa ham not forgetting to weigh and label your bag. Once ready slice thinly and use as a starter dish with a seasoned salad.

### **Handy Hints & Tips:**

Use fine sea salt for better flavours

Use of salt inhibits bacteria

Use of curing salt (i.e. salt & saltpetre) inhibits bacteria as-well as keeping Botulinum at bay

Do not remove any curing liquid until the end of the curing time

Inspect your meat daily

Finding a benign white powdery mould on your meat is a good sign

Finding coloured furry moulds are a bad sign, remove by scraping and dabbing the area with a little vinegar and continue

Not following the instructions and quantities could result in food poisoning. If in doubt, seek professional advice before using

Places where curing salts can be purchased:

[www.weschenfelder.co.uk](http://www.weschenfelder.co.uk)

[www.sausagemaking.org](http://www.sausagemaking.org)

[www.scobiesdirect.co.uk](http://www.scobiesdirect.co.uk)

Helpline and guides [for the use of curing](http://www.lucas-ingredients.co.uk/trub_drycuring.htm) agents:

[http://www.lucas-ingredients.co.uk/trub\\_drycuring.htm](http://www.lucas-ingredients.co.uk/trub_drycuring.htm)