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BPEX, PO Box 44, Winterhill House, Snowdon Drive, Milton Keynes MK6 1AX

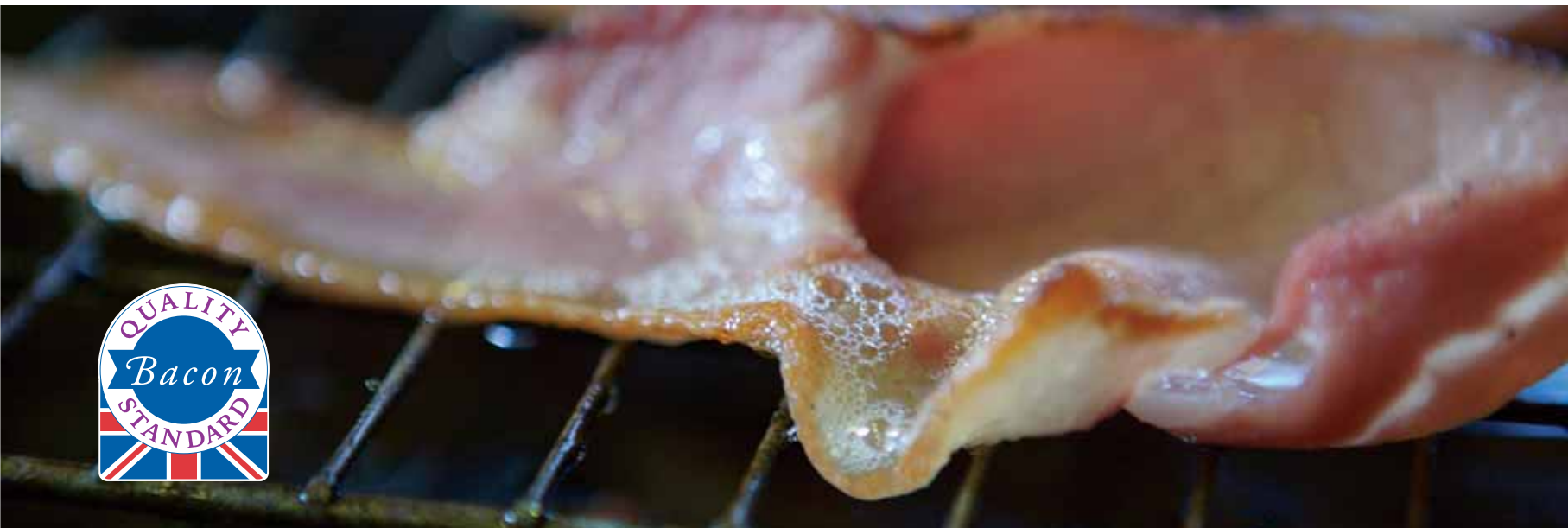
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BACK at last SPECIAL  
SWEETCURE STREAKY BACON  
smoked -derinded+MAPLE SYRUP 135p

# Bacon

A guide to premium bacon cures in *Britain*



# Savour your Bacon

Crisp, sizzle, crackle. Bacon. It delivers robust flavours, a deeply satisfying eating experience and lasting pleasure and has remained at the very heart of British food culture for centuries.

First used in England in the Middle Ages and regularly referred to throughout literary history – streaky bacon was even featured in Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* in 1838 and is referenced in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV* – it is famed for being the main stay of this country’s love affair with a traditional cooked breakfast.

Evoking a feel-good nostalgia through its instantly recognisable and much-loved aroma, bacon, in all its various cures, is a wonderfully versatile meat that can bring a whole raft of new taste sensations to both contemporary and traditional recipes.

From fairly humble beginnings, when pigs were kept by almost every household, the bacon rasher has developed in sophistication to become a profound treat for the senses. While the bacon sandwich remains an iconic part of Britain’s national heritage, today quality bacon, often labelled as premium bacon, lends itself to a wealth of delicious dishes for a host of meal occasions.

The trusted Quality Standard Mark – the benchmark for bacon excellence – was introduced in 1999 and acts as a guarantee that the bacon consumers are buying has been produced to exacting quality and welfare standards.

So, savour the superb flavour and scrummy texture of the prime bacon cures included in our recipes for some of the best eating experiences one could hope for from a rasher.





Quality

# Taste

## The Connoisseur's Guide to Cures



**What is known today as curing is a modern refinement of the ancient process of meat salting, a method of preservation used for centuries to keep families fed through the winter months.**

These days our quality bacons can be either 'Dry Cured' with a salt based mixture or 'Wet Cured' through immersion in a liquid brine. Almost all are available smoked or unsmoked – it is simply a matter of personal preference.

From classic Dry Cure through to Wiltshire Cure and all the Smoked variations, the choice of quality bacon cures available to the modern day consumer is varied and delicious, providing a fantastic array of tastes and textures to bring to the table.

But where to start? When it comes to choosing the right cure for the right eating occasion the variety of choice can be mindboggling. Here we aim to educate, advise and enlighten with our connoisseur's guide to the essential bacon cures.



## Dry Cured

Of the two most recognised methods of curing, Dry Cure and Wet Cure, this is the oldest. Traditionally farmhouses would adopt their own, distinct recipe, apply the ingredients to the meat and hang it in the inglenook above the fireplace. Dry cured bacon was also a key ingredient in the rations sent aboard ship for long-distance sea journeys.

Today, whilst individual recipes are many and varied (and often jealously guarded secrets), traditional dry-curing still involves the time-consuming process which requires each cut of pork to be hand rubbed with a sea salt based mix (to ensure a delicate flavour) and then cured for at least five days. The meat is then matured and air-dried for up to 20 days before finally being ready to eat. The dry curing process expels water from the pork which means that the bacon shrinks less whilst cooking and shouldn't exude any 'white bits' in the pan.

The gentle flavour and taste of Dry Cured is ideal for use in the beloved English breakfast and the iconic bacon sarnie. Perfect too in salads, where the mild flavour will inject a frisson of taste. With its delicate flavour, making it particularly suitable for families, Dry Cure is known lovingly as 'bacon as it used to taste'.

## Traditional Wiltshire Cure

The original and most famous of the 'wet cures', the Traditional Wiltshire Cure dates back to the 1840s when the Harris family in Wiltshire, the country's most prominent bacon producing county, developed what at the time was considered to be a revolutionary cure. In an age without electric refrigeration the family would pack the roof with ice to keep the meat fresher for longer.

In the 21st century the process still involves having the whole bone in and rind on sides of pork being immersed in a special recipe brine for up to two days. But now the cold storage is rather more high tech! In accordance with the traditional Wiltshire method the bacon is given a fortnight to mature, and time – after salt – is the most important ingredient.

Wiltshire Cure has a subtle, slightly salty flavour and a distinctively meaty texture. It works well as a recipe component as its slight saltiness helps to draw out the flavours of the other ingredients without dominating them.

## Maple Cure

As its name suggests Maple Curing involves the addition of maple syrup to the curing mixture - either as part of the external rub, as in the case of a dry cure - or as an added ingredient to the brine in the wet cured version. The rich syrup is then drawn into the meat during the curing process of up to five days, giving the bacon its distinctive sweet caramelised flavour. The cured bacon is then often smoked to add an increased depth of flavour.

Smoky and woody with a sweet aroma, Maple Cured bacon is an indulgent, mouth-watering treat. Its unique, intense character makes it more suitable as the centrepiece of the meal, rather than as an ingredient, where it could swamp other flavours. Perfect for an indulgent brunch or a five star bacon sandwich.

## Sweet Cure

Sugars of varying kinds, such as Muscavado, Demerara or Molasses are the dominant feature of Sweet Cure bacon. Spices such as juniper are also sometimes added for extra flavour. The curing process follows the same key principles as for the basic dry or wet cure, but the addition of sugar as the leading feature of the cure results in mouth-watering, moreish bacon with a flavoursome aroma and smoky, syrupy notes.

A popular bacon, Sweet Cure will help to elevate any meal such as pasta or pizzas. Its recognisable taste also makes Sweet Cure more appealing to adults - especially for sandwiches and salads.

## Smoked Bacon

Smoking is not a cure in itself, rather the smoking process is one that occurs after the bacon has been cured to give an added flavour hit. Whilst today smoking can involve coating bacon in a 'smoke flavour' liquid to gain the authentic flavour, quality smoked bacon is usually produced in the more traditional fashion, by smoking over wood chippings. Of these there are many variations, such as Cherry, Applewood, Beech and Hickory to name but a few. One of the most popular is Oak Smoked.

Oak Smoked bacon has a rich aroma that gives way to a surprisingly mellow flavour. A predominantly smoky, slightly salty aftertaste is characteristic of this bacon. Succulent and moreish, Oak Smoked bacon has an earthy flavour that complements a mix of ingredients in a variety of recipes without overpowering them. Good for sandwiches and suppertime meals, Oak Smoked is a real family favourite.



# Tempting



“ A savoury bacon with a roasted nutty flavour. ”

## Ultimate Bacon Brunch with Pancakes and Maple Syrup

Feeds: 4

Time to cook: Approx 15 mins

### TAKE

Rashers lean Maple Cure back bacon

Plain flour

Egg

Milk

Oil

Maple syrup

### MAKE

Make batter for pancakes – Place 100g (4oz) plain flour in bowl. Make well in centre of flour and add 1 egg.

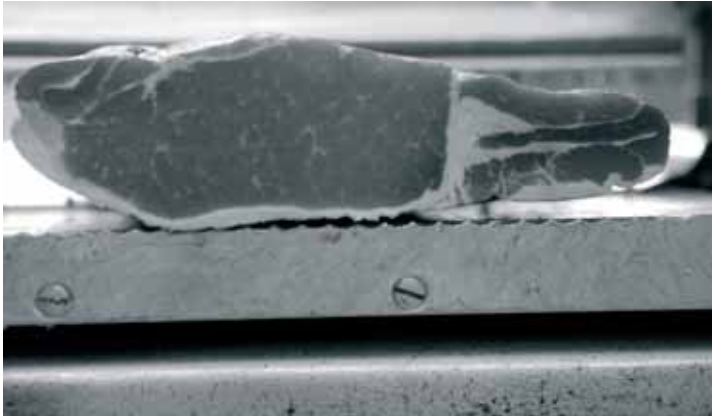
Beat egg and slowly incorporate flour. Add 125ml (¼pt) milk gradually until flour, egg and milk have combined into a smooth thick batter.

Grill 8-12 rashers lean Maple Cure back bacon for about 2-4 mins under a hot preheated grill.

To make pancakes – Heat 5ml (1tsp) oil in a non stick pan, when hot tip out any residue oil. Add 4 large spoonfuls of batter, allow to set and brown on one side before carefully turning. Repeat using all batter.

Serve pancakes stacked with crispy bacon rashers and liberally pour over maple syrup.

# Sizzling



“ A refined, meaty flavour.  
Deep-flavoured, balanced  
with a long finish. ”

## Toasted Bacon, Gorgonzola and Apple Panini

Feeds: 2

Time to cook: Approx 5 mins

### TAKE

Rashers lean Dry Cured back bacon  
Ciabatta bread or rolls  
Gorgonzola cheese  
Apple  
Butter

### MAKE

Lightly grill 6 rashers lean Dry Cured back bacon. Cut 1 ciabatta loaf or 2 small in half. Place 50g (2oz) ripe gorgonzola cheese onto the bread. Lightly fry 1 apple, thinly sliced, in 12g (½oz) butter until golden brown, and place on cheese.

Finally top with rashers of bacon, place under grill for 1-2 mins until bacon crispy and cheese slightly softened.

### EAT

Serve with a mixed leaf salad and extra fruity chutney.





## Bacon Frittata

Feeds: 2

Time to cook: Approx 10 mins

### TAKE

Rashers lean Oak Smoked back bacon

Oil

Cooked new potatoes

Red onion

Eggs

Fresh chives

Green olives

Fresh cherry tomatoes

Mozzarella cheese

### MAKE

Heat 15ml (1tbsp) oil in a non-stick frying pan and cook 6 rashers of lean Oak Smoked back bacon, 300g (10oz) cooked new potatoes, drained and thickly sliced, and 1 red onion, thinly sliced, for 2-3 minutes until just turning golden brown. Meanwhile beat together 4 eggs with 15ml (1tbsp) fresh chives, chopped.

Add to the pan 6 green olives, pitted and sliced, 6-8 cherry tomatoes and 100g (4oz) mozzarella cheese, roughly torn. Pour over the eggs and cook for 2-3 minutes until just set. Finish cooking under a preheated grill until the eggs and cheese are cooked, brown and crispy.

### EAT

Serve the frittata sliced into thick wedges with extra grilled tomatoes and green crisp salad.



# Scrumptious

“ A good all-round succulent bacon with positive meaty flavours and a touch of oak-smoke on the finish.

Full-flavoured, structured and adaptable to different meal occasions.”





# Delicious



“ A light cure bacon that allows its positive meaty flavours to shine through. Light smoke and a rounded flavour make this a versatile bacon for all kinds of cooking uses. ”

## Bacon, Tomato, Spinach and Ricotta Linguine

Feeds: 2

Time to cook: Approx 10-12 mins

### TAKE

Rashers lean Wiltshire Smoked back bacon

Linguine pasta or spaghetti

Olive oil

Red onion

Sundried tomatoes

Ricotta cheese

Fresh spinach

Fresh basil

### MAKE

Cook **linguine** (about 100g (4oz) dried weight per person) in a pan of boiling water as per pack instructions.

Meanwhile put **15ml (1tbsp) olive oil** into a pan, add **1 red onion**, thinly sliced, and **6 rashers lean Wiltshire Cure Smoked back bacon**, roughly chopped, and lightly cook.

Add **4 sundried tomatoes**, roughly chopped, and **100g (4oz) ricotta cheese** and lightly heat and blend together. Add **50g (2oz) spinach leaves** and stir through.

### EAT

Serve straight away scattered with black pepper, torn basil, chunks of crusty bread and a tomato and basil salad.



# Entertaining

“ A clean-tasting bacon with a mild cure. A good all-rounder. This will go with all kinds of foods. ”

## Bacon and Goats Cheese Tarts

Feeds: 4 - 6 (makes 12)  
Time to cook: Approx 15 mins  
Oven temperature: Gas Mark 7, 220°C, 425°F

### TAKE

Rashers lean Wiltshire Cure back bacon  
Packet puff pastry  
Jar roasted peppers  
Goats cheese  
Black pepper

### MAKE

Roll out 500g packet puff pastry on a floured surface (or use ready rolled) and cut out 12 squares.

Top each cut out with a slice of roasted pepper, a slice from 150g pack goats cheese and 1-2 rashers lean Wiltshire Cure back bacon, cut in half. Season with black pepper. Repeat using remaining ingredients.

Place onto baking sheets and cook in a preheated oven for approximately 15 minutes until golden.

### EAT

Serve as starter or snack with rocket leaves.





# Satisfying



“ A bacon with rounded complex notes of herbs, Christmas spice and caramel. A long savoury finish. ”

## Bacon, mixed Mushroom and Rocket Risotto

Feeds: 2

Time to cook: Approx 35 mins

### TAKE

Rashers lean Sweet Cure back bacon

Oil

Onion

Risotto rice

Mixed mushrooms

Stock

Black pepper

Asparagus

Rocket leaves

Parmesan cheese

### MAKE

Heat 5ml (1tsp) olive oil in a saucepan and cook 6-8 rashers lean Sweet Cure back bacon, cut into large pieces, with 1 onion, chopped and 150g (5oz) risotto (Arborio) rice for 2-3 minutes.

Add 50g (2oz) mixed mushrooms, 600ml (1pt) pork stock, and bring to the boil, season and simmer gently for approximately 30 minutes or until the rice is cooked and all the liquid absorbed. (Add a little more stock if you wish to achieve your desired texture/consistency.)

Add 100g (4oz) asparagus, roughly broken into large pieces, top with rocket leaves and grated parmesan cheese and serve.

# Comforting

## Bacon, Carrot, Butter-bean and Coriander Soup



“ A finely balanced flavour with sweet, mild, smoky aromas...a good meaty flavour and a succulent texture...a sweet edge follows through on the finish. ”

Feeds: 4  
Time to cook: Approx 25-30 mins

### TAKE

Rashers lean Hickory Smoked streaky bacon  
French stick for serving  
Onion  
Carrots  
Ham stock  
White wine  
Ground coriander  
Black pepper  
Can butter-beans  
Fresh coriander  
Extra bacon to serve

### MAKE

Dry fry 6 rashers lean Hickory Smoked streaky bacon, diced, for 2-3 minutes, add 1 large onion, thinly sliced, and 450g (1lb) carrots, peeled and finely sliced, to the pan and sauté for a further 2-3 minutes. Add 750ml (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ pt) ham stock, 150ml ( $\frac{1}{4}$ pt) white wine, 5ml (1tsp) ground coriander, black pepper and 400g (approx) can butter-beans, drained. Season well and simmer for 10-15 minutes until carrots are soft. Stir in 30ml (2tbsp) fresh coriander, roughly chopped, and adjust seasoning.

### EAT

Serve with slices of french stick toasted with a smear of pesto sauce and large rasher of crispy bacon.

