

Lardo

Lardo is one of those foods born of poverty. Its preparation dates back at least a 1,000 years! The Italian word “Lardo” is not to be confused with the English word “lard”. Lard (English) is rendered pork fat and in Italian it is called “strutto”. After slaughter there is a very large amount of fat that is obtained. While much of it goes into the preparing of various salumi, often the thick portions of fat on the back of the pig are saved and cured. Each locality has its own preferred method and the one most well know is called “Lardo di Colonata” which is produced in Tuscany in towns where there are marble quarries. The preparation and curing takes place in a marble tub (called a “Conca”). These tubs then placed in caves or in cool cellars to age and mature. The fat gets a unique flavor from a combination of garlic and herbs in which it is covered.



Method:

1. The fat used should preferably be fresh, not frozen obtained as soon after slaughter as possible. The slabs are then trimmed to fit the exact dimensions of the curing chamber, so that there are no air gaps!
2. I use the following flavoring mixture: koshering salt, finely minced garlic, sprigs of rosemary, sprigs of marjoram, sprigs of sage, and coarse ground black pepper. Keep about half of the sprigs whole and coarsely chop the remaining half. The proportions will vary for the garlic and salt and pepper depending upon the amount of fat you will cure. This is not “rocket science”; adjust flavors to your taste (try to keep the amounts of the herbs equal to each other)
3. The fat slabs are rubbed with coarse salt on all sides; and then a slab of fat is layered in the container, herbs, pepper and garlic are added and another section of fat and herbs, etc. are added. This is done until the container is full, and then it is covered and weighted.
4. Not having a cave or cellar, I store my container (I used a sealable plastic food container) in the lower shelf of a refrigerator at 38°F for 6 months. During the curing and aging, a brine or “salamoia” in which the fat is immersed will form. No other preservatives are added.
5. After 6 months, I remove it, brush off the large herbs and hang the slabs on “bacon hooks” and let them air dry for 4 weeks at about 55°F and approximately 50% R/H.

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