



BRINING RECIPES

FOR SALT BRINING OR SUGAR CURING TURKEY,
CHICKEN, BACON & HAM

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Brining boosts flavor and makes meat tender. Brining, which consists of soaking meat in a solution of water, salt and often sugar and sometimes curing agents, has a dramatic effect on meats of all kinds.

How Brines Work - Salt is made of two ions, sodium and chloride that are oppositely charged. Proteins, such as those in meat, are large molecules that contain negative and positive charges. When proteins are placed in a solution containing salt, they readjust their shape to accommodate the opposing charges. This rearrangement of the protein molecules compromises the structural integrity of the meat, reducing its overall toughness. It also creates gaps that fill up with water. The added salt makes the water less likely to evaporate during cooking, and the result is meat that is both juicy and tender.

You can brine as much product as you can submerge in your brine, but you may not reuse the brine. Brine can only be used once. Just pick the amount you need for product you want to brine.

Sugar Curing Brine - To make **Corn Beef** using this brine add 2 tsp pickling spices per each gallon of brine.

Ingredients:

5 gal. water	2-1/2 gal. water	1-1/4 gal. water
1 lb. canning salt	8 oz. canning salt	4 oz. canning salt
1 lb. cure #1	8 oz. cure #1	4 oz. cure #1
1-1/2 lb. dextrose	12 oz. dextrose	6 oz. dextrose

The amount of Dextrose (a sugar that dissolves easily and is not as sweet as cane sugar), may be reduced if you want to add brown or maple sugar for a different flavor. Some people add brown sugar when doing ham while others add maple when curing bacon. However, you must maintain the recipe's **ratio** between the salt, cure and sugar)

Salt Brine

Ingredients:

1- gal. water
9.5 oz. canning salt (which equates to right at a cup of salt per gallon of water)

Basic Sugar Brine

Ingredients:

1-quart water
1/3 cup canning salt
1/3 cup sugar (the sugar helps counteract the salt by adding sweetness to the brine).

You can also add other flavorings to the brine to influence the flavor of the meat such as sugar, molasses, hot sauce, beer, wine, juices, etc. See flavor brine below.

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Flavoring Brine

Ingredients:

2-gal water	1 TS dried rosemary
1-1/2 cups canning salt	1 TS thyme
3 cups sugar	1/4 cup molasses
1/4 cup liquid crab boil	1/4 cup white wine (not cooking wine)
4 TS black pepper	1/4 cup Worcestershire

When using Brines that are not Curing Brines (do not contain Cure #1 or Cure #2) you can soak a turkey about 10-12 hours, chicken for about 4 hours, Cornish hens for a couple of hours – always under refrigeration at 38-40 degrees. If you are brining shrimp or fish fillets, only brine for 30 to 45 minutes.

Equipment Needed

Plastic, Crock, Plastic Bag or Stainless-Steel Container (large enough to hold the brine solution plus the meat). Always use a small non-reactive container when brining as salt will react to aluminum.

Meat Pump (If you **intend** to inject the meat & you should, especially on large pieces of meat)

Making the Brine Concentrate - Add all the ingredients, that need to dissolve, to water to make a concentrate. At this point you only need a small amount of the actual water called for in the brine recipe - a quarter to a third is plenty to make this "concentrate". Then bring the water to a boil, briefly, to dissolve and infuse the ingredients. Remove from heat, add the remaining required water to make the brine, then chill the water to 38 degrees F.

Prep & Brining

Wash the turkey, chicken, bacon, ham or brisket with cold water keeping the meat chilled to 38 degrees F. Submerge in the cooled brine solution for up to 5 days under refrigeration of 38-40 degrees F. Larger turkeys or hams should be submerged for 5 days. Corn Beef, Bacon, Chicken will cure within 48 hours but for the best flavor and color you can brine for 4-5 days.

Injecting/Pumping - This "Pickle" method speeds the process so if time is short you may inject (pump) the turkey, chicken, bacon, ham or brisket with the brine/curing solution using an amount equal to 10% of its weight (a 10 lb. ham would require pumping with 1 lb. of brine). Use a meat injector/pump to do this. When pumping hams inject the brine close to the bone. When pumping chicken or turkey inject the brine in the thick areas like the breasts and thighs. After pumping place the product in ice-cold water for 3-4 hours, keeping the water ice cold by refrigeration or adding ice as needed. Remove from the water and place in the brine "Pickle" solution and keep refrigerated for at least 48 hours at 38-40 degrees.

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Cooking/Smoking - After curing is complete, rinse in cold water. If smoking place in a smoking bag or hang with hooks. Place in a smoke house pre-heated to 130 degrees F. and heat at this temperature for 1 hour with the damper open. Close damper and apply smoke for 4 hours at 130 degrees F. Raise temperature to 150 degrees and hold for 4 hours. For bacon remove when internal temperature reaches 135 degrees F. For ham, turkey or chicken continue by raising temperature to 180 - 185 degrees F. and hold until internal temperature reaches 160 degrees F. Measure the internal temperature of the turkey or chicken with a baby dial thermometer by inserting the thermometer into the breast or the ball and socket joint of the thigh. Be sure not to touch the bone. Measure the internal temperature of your ham in the thickest part. Remove from the smokehouse and let it cool until the internal temperature drops to 100 degrees F.

The above brining procedure (using cure) will cause the meat to turn pink in color. If this color is not desired, you may omit the cure from the above ingredients or use the salt brine formula below. However, if you omit the cure you may not process at temperatures **under 225 degrees which means no smokehouse temperatures but more like oven temps.**

If smoking brined but uncured meat, in a smokehouse, you **MUST** preheat the smoke house to 180 degrees F. and hold the product at this temperature for 1 hour. Raise the smoke house temperature to 225-250 degrees F. and **COOK** the meat until the required internal temperature. Without cure you must **COOK** the meat at these higher temperatures to prevent food poisoning. You may also cook the brined but uncured meat in the kitchen oven

We recommend using the cure, as this will enhance the flavor and color of the meat as well as doing a better job when smoking and cooking at the lower temperatures. This method prevents shrinkage and allows the finished product to retain more of its natural juices

Brining Meat Basics

Brining meat is a way to maximize the juice and natural flavor present in any type of meat, specifically poultry and fish. Meat soaked in a brine does take in liquid.

Leaner meat will tend to dry out very quickly if cooked past what is necessary, so to make meat juicier and not so dry brining is the answer.

Canning salt is small grain and will dissolve much better than table salt and does not include iodine or additives, which can produce an off flavor and color.

If you use kosher salt (except for Morton's which uses smaller crystals.) you will need to use about 1-1/2 the amount of salt per every gallon of water.

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