

RIVER COUNTRY POPPERS

This one was inspired by Wayne at the River Country Store in Shannondale, WV. I don't recall exactly how it came about, but he told me about sliced jalapenos over peanut butter on Ritz crackers. I tried it and it was one of the most surreal taste experiences that I can recall. At some time after that I said to myself, "Self! Let's make poppers out of that!"

INGREDIENTS

Qty.	Unit	Item
20	Cracker	Nabisco Original Saltines [i]
1	TBSP	Tabasco Sauce
1	TBSP	Worcestershire Sauce
1	Cup	Jif Creamy Peanut Butter
AR	N/A	Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips
1.25	lb	Jalapenos [ii]
1 - 2	lb packs	Regular Cut Bacon [iii]

SPECIAL TOOLS

- Food Saver (or similar vacuum sealer) [iv]
- Vacuum seal bags or bag rolls [iv]
- Grill / smoker with mesquite wood / pellets. [v]
- 1/8 TSP measuring spoon [vi]
- Copper Crisper [vii]

PREPARATION

- 1) Rinse the jalapenos and pat dry
- 2) Remove the stems, but be careful not to remove the stem root; if we do this, the filling will leak out!
- 3) Slice the jalapenos in half length-wise
- 4) Scope out the ribs and seeds with the 1/8 TSP measuring spoon and set aside. Make sure to NOT remove the stem base so that the filling will not drain out
- 5) Put jalapenos in fridge until needed later
- 6) Mince the ribs and seeds as fine a possible with a chef's knife and set aside.
- 7) Put the Saltines into a gallon Ziploc bag. Lightly crush with a rolling pin (NOT TOO FINE!!!).
- 8) Measure out 1 cup of the peanut butter and put in glass bowl
- 9) Mix in Worcestershire Sauce, Tabasco, and 4 TBSP lightly packed minced seeds and ribs a little bit at a time.
- 10) Mix in the lightly crushed saltines a little bit at a time.
- 11) Fill the jalapeno halves with the peanut butter mix .
- 12) Press in chocolate chips evenly across the jalapenos [viii].

- 13) Wrap the jalapenos in bacon across their entire length. One piece should be enough, but a little stretching may be required.
- 14) If you are not going to cook them now, vacuum seal and put in the freezer.
- 15) Heat smoker to 250 deg. F.
- 16) When the smoker reaches temperature, put the poppers on the copper crispers and put into the smoker.
- 17) Cook for about 2 ½ hours, checking occasionally, until the bacon is nice and crisp.
- 18) Let cool on the counter for about 5 minutes.
- 19) EAT AND ENJOY!!!

NOTES

- i. This should be about a half sleeve.
- ii. Decent size jalapenos, but not too big! Maybe around 10 or so Jalapenos to the pound. It came out to 12 peppers for 1 lb 3.4 Oz.
- iii. Use regular cut bacon, about 16 slices to a pound. Thick cut bacon may not crisp up as nicely in the smoker. There will be some leftover bacon; I suggest vacuum sealing to maximize the storage time in the fridge.
- iv. Only really required if you plan on doing the prep work in advance or if you want to vacuum seal the leftover bacon. The poppers freeze great! Just let them thaw in the fridge overnight before throwing on the smoker.
- v. If you don't have this, the oven should be fine, but you won't get that "little bit of extra."
- vi. This is not really a common size, but is perfect for this task. If you don't have it, use whatever else that will let you get the ribs and seeds out without scraping out too much pepper.
- vii. Cooling racks and sheet pans will also work.
- viii. This is you main sweetness component. Add less for less sweetness or leave out completely. It is up to you!

PICTURES















