

SCOTTY POPPERS

Why do I call these Scotty Poppers? Because Scotty gave me the tasty jalapenos I used in this recipe from his garden and the inspiration for the recipe came to me after I talked to him for a while about the River Country Poppers. Scotty is the MAN!

I have a couple of other popper ideas as well. I just may have to create a separate section for popper recipes!

INGREDIENTS

BRINE

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Item</u>
2	12 oz. Bottles	Sierra Nevada Pale Ale
2	TBSP	Kosher Salt
4	TBSP	Brown Sugar
4	TBSP	White Sugar
5	oz.	Tabasco Original
1	TSP	Rosemary
1	TSP	Thyme
1	TSP	Garlic Power
Several	N.U.	Bay Leaves

SAUCE

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Item</u>
8	TBSP	Land o' Lakes Salted Butter [i]
5	oz.	Tabasco Original
2	N.U.	Small limes
1	6 oz. can	Tomato Paste
2	Cloves	Garlic
AR	-----	Corn Starch

THE POPPERS

Qty.	Unit	Item
1 1/2	Lbs	Jalapeno Peppers
1 - 2	16 oz. Pack	Regular Cut Bacon
4	Thighs	Bone-In, Skin-On Chicken Thighs
1	4 oz. container	Crumbled Blue Cheese

I don't know that I have a preference for Blue Cheese Brand, but for this round I used "Salemville Smokehaus Blue - Blue Cheese Crumbles". Quite tasty!

I do know that I like Kunzler bacon, with the Hormel Black Label being a close second

SPECIAL TOOLS

- Immersion blender
- Sous vide machine [v]
- Food Saver (or similar vacuum sealer) [v, xi]
- Vacuum seal bags or bag rolls [v, xi]
- Traeger Pellet Grill with Mesquite Pellets [iv]
- Copper Crispers [x]

PREPARATION

BRINE

Not much to this part...

- 1) Split the ingredients between (Qty. 2) 1 quart Pyrex measuring cups and mix with an immersion blender
- 2) Cover with plastic wrap or saucers and set aside until needed
- 3) If it will be a while, blend the brine again just before you add it to the chicken in the Sous Vide bags

POPPERS – PART I

- 1) Heat Sous Vide Machine 140 deg. F
- 2) Make (Qty. 2) 4-line vac seal bags [vi]
- 3) Add 2 chicken thighs to each bag
- 4) Split brine evenly between the two bags
- 5) OK... this next part might get a bit tricky... The goal is to vacuum seal the chicken thighs and brine with as little leftover air as possible WITHOUT sucking liquid into the vacuum sealer
 - a. Position the vacuum sealer near the edge of a counter
 - b. Squeeze out as much air as possible from the bag
 - c. Position the bag in the vacuum sealer so that it hangs over the edge of the counter [vii]
 - d. Pull a vacuum as long as possible until liquid just about reaches the vacuum sealer and trigger the seal function
 - e. After one minute, re-trigger the seal function
 - f. After one minute, pull the bag and wipe out any liquid between the top of the bag and the seal line
 - g. Reposition the bag to place a second seal just above the first one and trigger the seal function
 - h. After one minute, re-trigger the seal function
 - i. Place the bag o' chicken in the fridge
 - j. Repeat Steps 5a through 5h for the second bag
- 6) Once the Sous Vide machine has reach temperature, add both the bags o' chicken
- 7) Add additional water as required to cover the bags o' chicken [viii]
- 8) When the Sous Vide machine temperature recovers, set a timer for
 - a. 4 hours for non-frozen chicken
 - b. 4 ½ hours for frozen chicken
- 9) About 2 hours out, take the Traeger out on your deck, fill with your pellets of choice, and set to smoke
- 10) Once you see smoke, close the lid and set to max temperature
- 11) Let it heat for at least 30 minutes, then set it to shutdown cycle
- 12) About 1 hour out, rinse the jalapenos and pat dry
- 13) Remove the stems, but be careful not to remove the stem root; if we do this, the filling will leak out!
- 14) Slice the jalapenos in half length-wise
- 15) Scope out the ribs and seeds with the 1/8 TSP metal measuring spoon and set aside.
Make sure to NOT remove the stem base so that the filling will not drain out
- 16) Put jalapenos in fridge, uncovered, until needed later
- 17) Put the ribs and seeds in a separate container and put in the fridge. These will not be used for this recipe, but can be used for something else
- 18) When timer goes off, pull the Sous Vide chicken and drain through fine mesh strainer on top of a quart measuring cups
- 19) Allow chicken to cool until it can be handled with bare hands

SAUCE

About ½ hour from the Sous Vide chicken being done (or after you have finished slicing the jalapenos)

- 1) Chop / mince the garlic
- 2) Add butter to a small sauce pan and melt over low heat
- 3) Add the rest of the ingredients and whisk [ii]
- 4) Use a hand-held immersion mixer after the initial mixing to get the ingredients REALLY integrated
- 5) Reduce heat to VERY low
- 6) Continue to heat on VERY low for a while (or when you're are ready to eat) whisking occasionally [iii]
- 7) If you want the sauce a little, thicker, stir in corn starch ½ TSP at a time

POPPERS – PART II

- 1) Once chicken has cooled, pour the drained chicken juice into 1 quart Ball jars and put in fridge. This will not be used in the recipe, but might be useful later.
- 2) Set the Traeger to smoke
- 3) Once you see smoke, close the lid and set to 250 deg. F
- 4) Remove the skin and bone from the chicken
- 5) Save the skin, but discard the bone
- 6) Dice the chicken into fine pieces, just this side short of a mince, and place in a glass bowl
- 7) Fold in the blue cheese crumbles
- 8) Fold in the sauce 2 TBSP at a time until the mixture gives a nice bite and the texture of the mix is a little on the wet side, about 6 TBSP total [ix]
- 9) Cover the sauce and remove heat
- 10) For each pepper half
 - a. Fill with the chicken mix so that it is mounded a little bit above the top of the pepper half
 - b. Wrap in bacon such that the entire pepper is wrapped with a single layer with overlapping edges. You don't want to be able to see the filling. This may take only a ½ piece of bacon for small peppers, but up to 1 entire piece of bacon for large peppers. Start with an entire piece and trim as required. The scraps can either be used to fill gaps in bacon coverage or saved for another project
 - c. Place on Copper Crisper. DON'T CROWD THE PEPPERS!
- 11) If you are not going to make all the poppers, vacuum seal the left overs and put in freezer. Tupperware and wax paper is fine if you are going to make the rest in the next day or so
- 12) Place the poppers in the Traeger
- 13) Cook until the bacon is nice and crispy, about 2 ½ hours. Start checking around the 2 hour mark to see how they are doing, but remember, "If you're looking, you ain't cooking"
 - a. Also at the 2 hour mark, put the heat back on sauce at VERY low

- 14) Pull the poppers inside and let rest for 5 minutes
- 15) Vacuum seal leftover bacon and stick in the fridge
- 16) Plate and top with extra sauce from the pot or put the sauce on the side
- 17) ENJOY!!!

NOTES

- i. I have never really given thought to unsalted vs salted butter until recently. Butter is butter right? Well, turns out that the amount of salt in salted butter may vary between brands (which is why I specified Land o' Lakes for this one). It is much easier to control the salt levels when you don't have to guess.
- ii. Make sure you use a Teflon whisk if you are using non-stick cookware.
- iii. If it becomes too separated, use the immersion mixer as needed.
- iv. If you don't have a Traeger or the like, you can use the oven. You will, however, miss out on that great smoke flavor.
- v. Is the Sous Vide machine really necessary? I think in this case yes. We are essentially using it to pasteurize the chicken thighs at a lower temperature so that when we put the poppers in the smoker, the chicken does not overcook.
- vi. Make double seals to be sure!
- vii. Make sure you clamp down and lock the vacuum sealer before you let go of the bag!!!
- viii. Don't go over the max fill line!
- ix. Adjust to taste, but you don't want it to be too wet or too dry
- x. Are these really necessary? Well, no, but I bought a couple a while back and found them very useful for this type of stuff. A half sheet cooling rack in a half sheet pan should work just as well
- xi. The vacuum sealer is GREAT for storing leftover bacon. Keeps it much fresher with no gray development like you might get in a regular old zip top bag

PICTURES

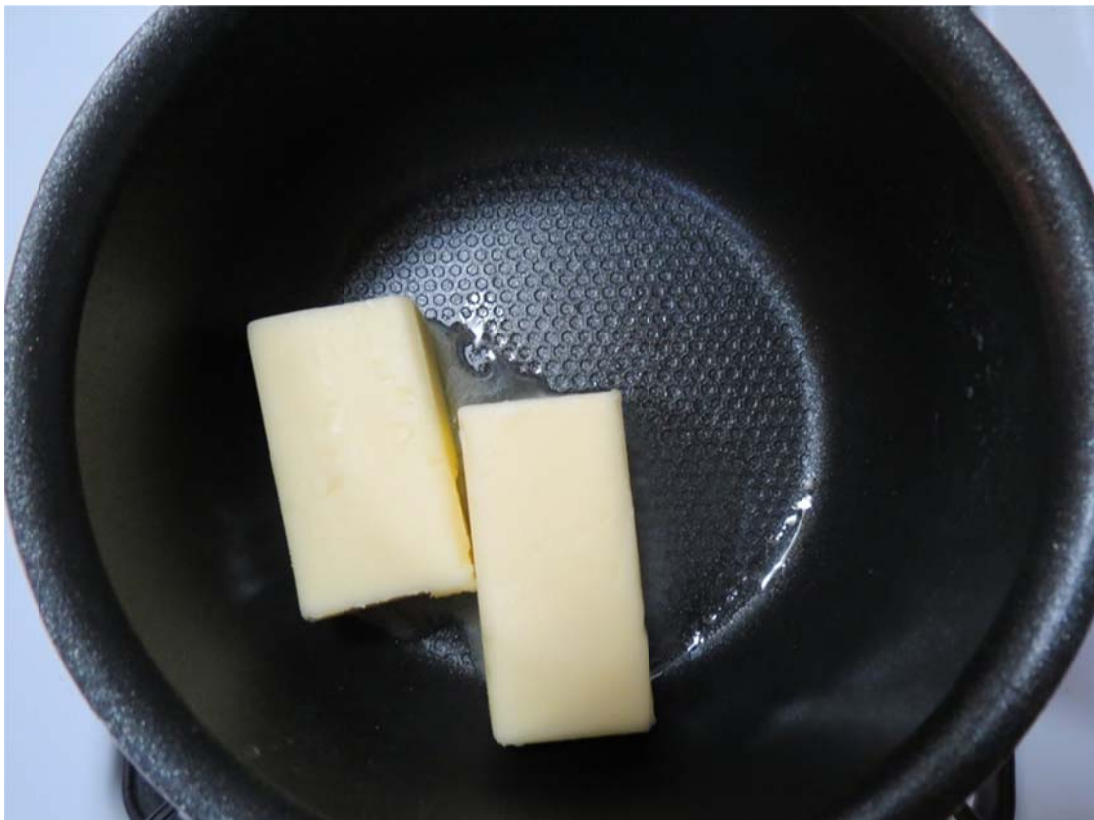
BRINE







SAUCE







POPPERS

No pictures of this part yet!