

SPICY CANDIED BACON

Thick-cut bacon lacquered with brown sugar, hot honey, and roasted jalapeño.



YIELD 12 strips

PREP 10 min

COOK 20–25 min

HEAT 400°F

INGREDIENTS

BACON

- 1 lb thick-cut bacon (about 12 slices)
- Nonstick spray, for the wire rack

CANDIED SPICE MIX

- 1/3 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1 tsp coarsely ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp crushed red-pepper flakes
- 1/4 tsp cayenne, optional for extra heat

HOT-HONEY FINISH

- 2–3 tbsp hot honey, enough for a thin drizzle
- 3 medium jalapeños, thinly sliced into rounds

METHOD

1 HEAT + RACK

Preheat a smoker, pellet grill, or oven to 400°F. Set a lightly greased wire rack inside a foil-lined rimmed sheet pan so rendered fat can drain without dripping into the heat source.

2 MIX THE CANDY

Combine brown sugar, black pepper, red-pepper flakes, and optional cayenne. Break up every sugar clump so the coating melts evenly instead of leaving scorched patches.

3 BUILD THE STRIPS

Lay bacon in one layer on the rack without overlaps. Press the sugar mixture evenly onto the top of each strip. Drizzle a thin line of hot honey over each, then add 4–5 jalapeño rounds.

4 COOK TO AMBER

Cook 20–25 minutes, rotating the pan once if your cooker heats unevenly. Pull the bacon when the fat is rendered, the coating bubbles, and the color is deep amber—not black. Bacon should reach at least 145°F.

5 COOL TO SET

Leave the strips on the rack for 10 minutes. The glaze is molten when it first comes out and firms as it cools. Move with tongs to parchment; serve whole, chopped over burgers, or beside brunch.

CANDY-COATING RULES

- Sugar can go from amber to burnt quickly; watch closely during the final 5 minutes.
- Hot glaze can burn skin—cool on the rack before tasting or moving by hand.
- Use thick-cut bacon so the strip stays meaty under the glaze and jalapeños.
- Refrigerate airtight for 3–4 days; rewarm on a rack at 350°F until glossy and crisp.

WATCH & LEARN

Cowboy Kent Rollins — jalapeño candied bacon · youtu.be/E8b7PwchlIg

Grill Sergeant — smoked hot-honey candied bacon · youtu.be/Qqm4wFHx6MQ