

plate

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FLAVOR PLAYERS

The innumerable curing and smoking options chefs face also offer opportunities to sneak in other flavors to make their bacon stand out.

At New York City's The Stanton Social, Chef Chris Santos goes for heat with the house-cured jalapeño bacon he serves a grilled cheese slider topped with Cheddar cheese, fried green tomato and lemon aioli (\$7, recipe, p. 64).

He cures his bacon with jalapeño powder, ancho chile powder and fresh jalapeños for 24 hours, balancing the spiciness with fat for a winning pairing.

"Bacon has a distinct flavor, but is so versatile; it's almost a blank palette. It can take on almost any other flavor without losing its personality," he notes.



Grilled cheese slider with Cheddar, house-cured jalapeño bacon, fried green tomato and lemon aioli

Chef Chris Santos, The Stanton Social, New York City

Menu price: \$7; food cost/serving: 26%

Yield: 2 servings

| | |
|--|--------|
| Sourdough bread, 1/2-inch thick slices | 4 each |
| Extra-virgin olive oil | 4 tsp |

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Lemon aioli ▼ | 1 1/2 tsp |
| Cheddar cheese, sliced | 12 to 14 Oz |
| Tomato, green, sliced, breaded and fried | 1 each |
| Jalapeño bacon ▼ | 4 slices |
| Salt and freshly ground black pepper | as needed |

1. Brush bread slices with oil and cut into small circles. Spread lemon aioli on 2 slices and divide cheese between remaining slices.
2. Place tomato and bacon on top of cheese, season with salt and pepper, then assemble sandwiches. Heat a dry 12-inch heavy skillet

(not nonstick) over medium-low heat. Cook sandwiches, turning once and pressing with a spatula, until bread is golden-brown and cheese is melted, 6 to 8 minutes total.

JALAPEÑO BACON

| | |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Yield: 4 slices | |
| Jalapeño powder | 1 tsp |
| Ancho chile powder | 1 tsp |
| Jalapeño, seeded, minced | 1 each |
| Salt | pinch |
| Bacon, slices | 4 each |

Combine ingredients and coat bacon. Stack

bacon and reserve 24 hours, refrigerated. Bake at 300 degrees F for 18 minutes.

LEMON AIOLI

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Yield: 2 qt | |
| Egg yolks | 10 each |
| Garlic cloves | 4 each |
| Lemons, juiced, zest of | 4 each |
| Olive oil | 6 C |
| Cilantro leaves, bunch | 1/2 each |

Whisk together egg yolks, garlic and lemon zest. Slowly drizzle in olive oil, whisking constantly. Stir in cilantro leaves and reserve.



"Leave me your name and number and I will get back to you. And while you're waiting for that call, why don't you take a minute to reflect what a great gift to the world bacon is. Mmmm

... bacon!" Voicemail message for Chef Chris Santos, The Stanton Social, NYC

BACON BABBLINGS

In season three of the Bravo TV Show "Top Chef," guest judge Ted Allen had a note to chefs; "If you want to make people happy, give them bacon." Most toques already know that bacon is the way to their meat-eating diner's hearts. We asked a few top chefs to strip down their thoughts on pork at its most perfect.

DISCOVERING bacon's sweet side
sauces rendered TO PERFECTION