Cooking everything from scratch is something I personally find very rewarding. It takes time and dedication to your craft but it becomes yours and when people appreciate it, you feel even more proud of what you've achieved.

This bacon recipe is one that has been evolving over a few years now. I think bacon is something that almost everyone can agree they crave once in a while...or more often!

I'm not gonna lie, it will take longer than buying premade at the grocery store.
But, once you know how to do it, you can always have a batch on the go.

I personally like to source a great quality animal when making bacon, it gives an extra layer that you won't find in most store bought products.
In this recipe I use Red Mangalitsa from Christina at Eh Farms in Strathmore
https://ehfarms.ca/
It's a great and unique product that we are happy to showcase at änkôr.

Black Pepper Bacon

This recipe is intended to be used ideally with a smoker that can cold smoke. If you have a hot smoker I have used this recipe in a hot smoker at 175F for 2.5 hours or until you reach an internal temperature of 150F. Although I find the end result better with a cold smoker it is also a great product with hot smoke.*

5	LBS	Pork Belly
2	TBSP	Brown Sugar
¼	Cup	Kosher Salt
¼	tsp	Curing Salt (Insta cure #2 / Prague Powder 2)
½	tsp	Cayenne pepper
½	tsp	Cumin
½	TBSP	Paprika
		Black Pepper

Tools

- Knife
- Pepper mill
- Large Ziplock Bags
- Wire racks
- Sheet pans
- Smoker (Ideally cold smoke)

Method

- Start by removing the skin on the hog's belly
- Depending on the shape of your belly try to cut pieces that are about 8" squares and place them into large ziploc bags
- Mix together all Dry ingredients except for Black pepper ***(It will be used closer to the end of the process)***
- Spread the dry cure over the bellies in the bags as evenly as possible and close the bag as air tight as you can.
- Put them in the fridge on top of each other and rotate bottom to top daily for the next 7 days. ***The weight of the top ones will press the bottom ones and help the whole process. There will be juices so make sure to have something under the bags in case they have tiny holes...***

- Once the seven days have passed, take them out of the bags and rinse all excess rub under running water.
- Fill up a container with ice cold water and soak your bellies in, Changing water every half hour for the next 1.5 to 2 hours. This process helps make sure your bacon won't be too salty. Depending on the size of your container versus the amount of bellies inside of it you might need to soak and change water more often. Note how you did and how long, if you find your bacon too salty next time either use a bigger container or change water more often. ***At the restaurant I use a 20L container changing water every half hour for 2 hours with a 5LBS recipe.***

- After the water process is done, place your bacon on wire racks above a pan skinless / fat side up
- Crack as much coarse black pepper as you can stick on the fat, the moisture from the water will help the black pepper stick to it.
- Let this sit in your fridge for a few hours to start drying out but not too much as moisture will help the smoke stick to the bacon with the next step.
- Place your bacon in the smoker and smoke for 2.5 hours. ***I Personally like to use applewood but you can play around and see!***
- Once the smoking process is done, refrigerate in a closed container for a day or 2 to let the smoke mellow out.
- It is now ready to be sliced and be enjoyed! ***At the restaurant I let the bacon in our dry ager for another week before we wrap and freeze. It helps with especially fatty pork to make sure you get the best texture you can once it is cooked.***