

---

# Texas Nordic: Graflax

---



## Texas Nordic

My whole family hunted, fished, and farmed here in the US for generations. As a boy, I really loved being on a boat fishing with my dad and uncle. Fish and seafood in general must be my favorite things to eat.

I wasn't introduced to smoked, cured, and pickled fish until we moved to Germany in my teens. It took flavor to a whole new level for me and I loved everything I could find. While working in Scotland years later, I'd have smoked kippers and tomatoes for breakfast. Smoked mackerel would become my favorite soon after.



My second favorite is graflax, when done right, and I'd like to share this one with you.

### Ingredients

- Salmon filet– the fresher the better!
- Fresh dill (or dried if you can't find fresh)
- Sea salt
- Sugar
- Lemon zest
- Caraway seeds
- Powdered fennel (optional)
- Brennivín (optional)



As for picking salmon for this dish, you'll want to look for very fresh fish with no off smells. If it smells fishy, that flavor will transfer over to your finished dish. Great fresh salmon smells lightly of the sea, or like a nice butter. The amount of dried ingredient here is based on how big your pieces of salmon are. Smaller pieces of fish will require less ingredient and will require less cure time in your fridge.

### Step 1

Remove scales from the skin of your salmon. You'll want to leave the skin on if possible. In some stores you can have your fishmarket/ fishmonger remove the scales for you when you buy. Here in Texas, I'm able to get fresh Norwegian Salmon so that's what I'm using for this recipe. Make sure to also remove any pin bones in

## Texas Nordic: Graflax

---

your filet. Cut the fish into two equal sized pieces as pictured, as you'll be sandwiching the dry cure and dill in between them later.

### **Step 2**

Mix 2 parts sea salt to 2 parts sugar and combine well. To this you can also add dried dill and optionally powdered fennel to taste. I keep a big container of this dried "sugar cure" in my kitchen for making graflax year-round. It doesn't spoil, so it's nice to keep some on hand. You'll need about 2 cups of this dry "sugar cure" per pound (1/2 kg) of salmon.



### **Step 3**

Cold rinse your salmon filets and pat dry. If you're using a flat-bottomed glass container with a lid, you can put a bit of this sugar cure in the bottom and start laying your fish on skin-side down. I sometimes use large gallon sized zip lock bags for this dish. You can alternately add some of the cure in the bag at this time if using one.



### **Step 4**

Cover the rest of the fish with your sugar cure as well, making sure to cover the surface of the filet. Chop your fresh dill and combine with lemon zest to taste. Add the fresh dill and caraway seeds on top of your fish, then do the same process with the other piece of fish and lay these pieces on top of each other with a generous layer of dill and cure in between them.

### **Step 5**

At this stage, you can optionally pour just a dash of Brennivín in between the fillets. This helps start part of the curing process whereby the dry ingredients will start

## Texas Nordic: Graflax

---

drawing water content out of the filets. It also imparts a really nice flavor into your graflax. You don't need it however as all of this works fine without this addition.

### **Step 6**

Once your fish is covered nicely in your glass dish (or ziplock bag) it's ready to go into the fridge. Depending on the thickness of your fish, you'll want to cure this chilled for 48 to 36 hours. You can cover the fish with cling film and add a bit of weight on top to press the fish down. It takes a bit of practice to figure out what degree of texture and flavor you want in your gravlax. I don't always weight mine down.



### **Step 7**

After 2 or 3 days, remove the fish from the container and wipe off the excess dill as seen on the previous page. Your graflax is now ready to slice and eat. Most people slice graflax into thin pieces with a long knife of some sort, and others enjoy it cut into small chunks. It's nice to have with crisp breads, toast, or my favorite, flatbrauð.

I usually enjoy mine with a beer as an appetizer for dinner, or sometimes have it for lunch. It also works great with Brennivín or other akvavit.