

## Lapsang Souchong Gravlax

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*Curing your own salmon takes a few days but the process is simple, and the flavor—infused with smoky Lapsang Souchong tea leaves and Chinese five-spice powder—is worth the wait. Thinner pieces of salmon from the tail cure faster. Try to match two tail pieces of about equal size.*

- 1½ CUPS COARSELY CHOPPED CILANTRO
- 1½ LB. FRESH SALMON FILLET (SKIN ON), CUT LENGTHWISE INTO 2 EQUAL PIECES
- 2 TBSP. COARSE SALT
- 2 TBSP. SUGAR
- 1 TBSP. LAPSANG SOUCHONG TEA LEAVES, LIGHTLY CRUMBLLED
- 1½ TSP. CHINESE FIVE-SPICE POWDER
- 1 TBSP. MIRIN
- LIME JUICE (OPTIONAL)
- CRUNCHY CRACKERS, FOR SERVING

Sprinkle about a third of the cilantro in the bottom of a deep glass or other nonreactive dish large enough to hold the salmon fillet flat. Lay 1 fillet, skin side down, in the dish.

Combine the salt, sugar, tea, and Chinese five-spice powder and sprinkle over the fish. Cover with another third of the cilantro. Drizzle with the mirin and place the remaining salmon, skin side up, over the first fillet. Scatter with the remaining cilantro. Cover the dish with plastic wrap and place a plate or dish with two 8- to 12-ounce cans on it to weight it evenly. Refrigerate 48 to 72 hours, turning and basting every 12 hours, until the flesh no longer appears translucent.

Once cured, remove fish from dish, scrape off cilantro and spice mixture, and pat dry. Working from the tip of the tail, thinly slice salmon from skin on the diagonal. Drizzle with a little lime juice, if desired, and serve on crunchy crackers with *Caper, Shallot, and Green Tea Cream Cheese*, if desired. Makes 1¼ pounds.