

Flavorful Lox Bagels

Bagels and lox are an iconic culinary pairing. The combination of bagels and lox was made famous by Jewish immigrants in New York City. Once found only in New York delis, this sandwich is now popular all across the country. Have you eaten a bagel with lox?

A bagel is a yeast bread formed into a round ring and boiled before baking. Typically, bagels have a crisp, shiny crust, dense inside, and a chewy texture.

What is lox? Lox is a type of preserved salmon that originated in Scandinavia, where Swedish fishermen perfected the art of preserving salmon in saltwater brine.

“Lox” and “smoked salmon” are often used interchangeably, but they differ. Smoked salmon and lox are prepared differently. Smoked salmon is cured or brined and then smoked. Salmon can be hot or cold-smoked. Lox is brined salmon belly that is never cooked or smoked.

Since lox is never cooked, it is smooth, translucent, and silky. It tastes very similar to other types of salmon and is saltier because of the brining process.

Smoked salmon becomes slightly more tough through the smoking process. Because of this, it looks and tastes more like grilled or baked salmon.

Typically eaten for breakfast or brunch, a lox bagel recipe generally includes just a few simple ingredients. The key components are the bagel, cream cheese, lox, thinly sliced red onion, and capers. First, cream cheese is spread on the bagel, with the lox placed on top, followed by the onion and the capers. The bagel flavor can be everything, multigrain, plain, poppy seed, sesame seed, wheat, or any other desired savory flavor. Capers are the green, unripened flower buds of the caper bush. The flavor of capers is tangy, briny, and somewhat lemony. Common additions include thinly sliced cucumbers, tomatoes, or avocados. In addition, fresh dill pairs superbly with salmon.

Here are a few sandwich tips you might find helpful. Toast the bagel for additional texture. A homemade or prepared cream cheese spread is easier to smear than a block of cream cheese. Place the capers on the cream cheese to prevent them from rolling off the sandwich.

Did you know that bagels and lox have nutritional value because of smoked salmon? The lox adds important nutrients to your meal, like omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D, and protein.

Bagels will keep in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 5 days. Unlike most yeast-based products, bagels can be frozen in an airtight container or freezer bag. They retain their flavor and feel once thawed.

Lox will last 5-8 days if it is tightly wrapped in the fridge. It will last up to two months if it is frozen.

Cream cheese is soft, smooth, unripened cheese made with cream or a mixture of milk and cream. It is available in full-fat, low-fat, and nonfat versions. Cream cheese is sold in a soft, whipped spread or in a foil-wrapped block. Toss the whole block or container if you see any mold forming. Cream cheese has to be refrigerated.

Sliced, chopped, or halved raw onions should be refrigerated as well. They can be stored in an airtight container or resealable plastic bag. They will last 7-10 days refrigerated. Freeze raw onions to extend their shelf-life.

Capers should be stored in the refrigerator after opening. They will last for months as long as they remain submerged in the brine.

You have not lived until you have had a bagel piled high with a schmear (cream cheese) and lox. So gather everything you need (bagels, cream cheese, lox, red onion, capers, and dill) to whip up some tasty lox bagels this week!

(Sources: www.delightedcooking.com; www.thekitchn.com; www.smithsonianmag.com; www.timeanddate.com; usda.gov)