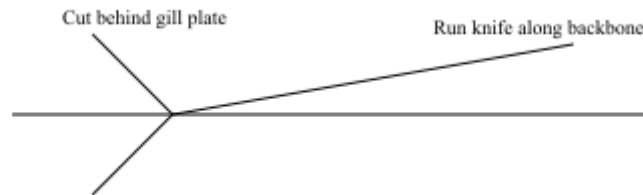


# Traditional Midwestern Smoked Carp: Complete Beginner's Guide

From fish cleaning to brining and smoking.

## 1. Cleaning the Fish

Scale the carp thoroughly. Remove the head and entrails. Fillet the fish by cutting behind the gill plate and running the knife along the backbone toward the tail. Trim away dark red lateral-line meat when possible.

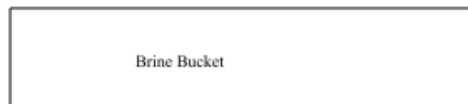


## 2. Cut Into Smoking Strips

Cut fillets into strips approximately 1–1.5 inches wide and 6–10 inches long. This helps the brine penetrate evenly and makes the fish easier to eat around remaining Y-bones.

## 3. Traditional Brine (12–18 Hours)

For 1 gallon water: 1 cup kosher salt, 1 cup brown sugar, 2 tbsp black pepper, 2 tbsp garlic powder, 2 bay leaves. Stir until dissolved and completely submerge fish.



## 4. Form the Pellicle

Remove fish from brine, rinse briefly, pat dry, and place on racks in a refrigerator for 2–4 hours until the surface becomes slightly tacky.

## 5. Seasoning

Lightly season with black pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, and paprika.

## 6. Smoking

Recommended woods: apple, cherry, or maple. Smoke at 130°F for 1 hour, then 150°F for 1 hour, then 175°F until the fish reaches 145°F internal temperature. Typical total time is 4–6 hours.

## 7. Serving

Allow the fish to cool slightly before serving. Excellent with crackers, rye bread, onions, mustard, or eaten straight from the smoker.