Salmon marinated with beetroot and dill

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A rosy take on the traditional gravlax, this is the perfect party food: light, delicious and completely prepared in advance.

SERVES 6 TO 8

Just slice it up and serve pickles, crackers and a stellar mustard sauce, and then don't spare another thought for party food. Just have fun in the knowledge that you've put on a beautiful, elegant spread and all that's left to do is enjoy it with your friends.

- Side of salmon, boned, about 800 g
- 100 g Demerara sugar
- 175 g coarse sea salt
- 10 g black peppercorns
- 4 tbsp vodka
- Large bunch dill, about 30 g
- 2 lemons, zested
- 2 tbsp finely grated orange zest
- 600 g raw beetroot

Check the salmon for any remaining bones, keeping an eye open for the tiny, almost invisible pin

bones. These can be removed with tweezers. Lay the salmon skin-side down on a stainless steel enamel tin or glass dish. If the fish is too long, cut it in half.

Put the Demerara sugar and salt in a mixing bowl. Roughly grind the peppercorns and add the sugar, salt and the vodka. Roughly chop the dill and its stems, and add to the marinade. Add the lemon zest to the sugar mixture with the grated orange zest. Peel and grate the beetroots, then stir into the other ingredients.

Spread the mixture over the fish and rub in well with your hands. Wrap a piece of clingfilm over the fish and place a heavy weight on top. (A small chopping board with a few cans on top will work.)

Refrigerate for between 48 hours and four days.

Pour off and discard any liquid that has seeped from the marinade. Remove the cling film and scrape away the marinade.

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