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Why Does Bacon Smell So Good?



After some rooting around online, I was able to turf up one fairly detailed study, however. In this research, scientists tried to discover the compounds that give frying bacon its aroma, by comparing it with the aromas released when cooking pork loin. They did this by frying the meat, mincing it, then passing nitrogen gas over it to collect any volatile organic compounds that were being released. The collected volatile compounds were then passed through a gas chromatograph and mass spectrometer in order for identification to be carried out.

The volatile compounds collected originate in part from the Maillard reaction, in which sugars in the foodstuff are broken down by reaction with amino acids as heating occurs. In bacon, other volatile compounds are produced due to the thermal breakdown of fat molecules. As well as this, in the case of smoked bacon, nitrite used in the curing process can also react with the fatty acids and fats present in bacon on heating – this leads to a higher percentage of nitrogen-containing compounds than in standard pork meat.

So, what compounds give bacon its aroma? The researchers compiled an exhaustive list of the

