Gravlax

Mark Bittman, NY Times Cooking

**1** **3- to 4-pound cleaned salmon without the head, skin on**

**1** **cup salt**

**2** **cups brown sugar**

**1** **tablespoon freshly ground black pepper**

**¼** **cup spirits, like brandy, gin, aquavit or lemon vodka**

**2** **good-size bunches of fresh dill, roughly chopped, stems and all**

 **Lemon wedges for serving**

 Fillet the salmon or have the fishmonger do it; the fish need not be scaled. Lay both halves, skin side down, on a plate.

 Toss together the salt, brown sugar and pepper and rub this mixture all over the salmon (the skin too); splash on the spirits. Put most of the dill on the flesh side of one of the fillets, sandwich them together, tail to tail, and rub any remaining salt-sugar mixture on the outside; cover with any remaining dill, then wrap tightly in plastic wrap. Cover the sandwich with another plate and top with something that weighs a couple of pounds -- some unopened cans, for example. Refrigerate.

 Open the package every 12 to 24 hours and baste, inside and out, with the accumulated juices. When the flesh is opaque, on the second or third day (you will see it changing when you baste it), slice thinly as you would smoked salmon -- on the bias and without the skin -- and serve with rye bread or pumpernickel and lemon wedges.