

BEEF BRISKET

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About Brisket

Brisket is - by nature - a tough cut of beef. Interestingly, it's also one of the most flavorful.

It's the connective tissue that runs throughout the meat that creates both a challenge and a tenderizing opportunity.

Cooked properly, that connective tissue melts into marvelous moistness, making a well-cooked brisket fork-tender.

How to do it right? Either

- 5-7 hours in a very slow (low) oven,
- 12-16 hours over low BBQ coals, or
- 80-90 minutes in your pressure cooker

A pressure cooker can help you bring moist, delicious brisket to your table.



Pressure Cooker Brisket

Ingredients

- 3-4 lb. brisket, trimmed of excess fat (you want to keep some of the fat cap on the meat)
- 2 T oil (olive, grapeseed or canola)
- 1 T tomato paste, or 3 T tomato sauce
- 1 onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 tsp dry thyme leaves
- 1 to 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp freshly ground pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 c red wine
- 1/2-3/4 c beef broth
- 3 T marmalade or jalapeno jelly

About Pressure Cookers

When I bought my first pressure cooker several years ago, I found very few books to help. Today, there seems to be a new cookbook published every other month. And then there are the websites and blogs devoted to pressure cooking. It's a time-saver with nutritional benefits!

While the appliances of yesteryear were usually aluminum and a bit intimidating, today's models are stainless steel and designed for safety. The electronic versions also feature lift-out pot inserts.

Tip: Look for stainless steel inserts.

There are two types of pressure cookers: stovetop and electric. I own and use both all the time.

The stovetop appliance is easy to use, but requires monitoring to make sure the heat under the cooker is just high enough to keep the device at pressure. Stove top pots reach cooking pressure and cool down more quickly than the electronic models.

Tip: Never fill a pot more than 2/3 full.

Instructions*

1. Pat brisket dry and rub with ground pepper.
2. Heat oil in pressure cooker.
 - **Electronic pressure cooker**, set to "sauté" function.
3. Over medium high heat, brown brisket on all sides. Remove from pot and set aside.
4. Reduce heat to medium, and sauté onion until translucent (about 5 minutes), stirring occasionally to prevent sticking or burning.
5. Add thyme, salt, oregano and tomato paste and sauté one minute.
6. Stir in wine, and scrape up bits of meat and vegetables at bottom of pot. Simmer for about 4 minutes to cook the wine and reduce slightly.
7. Stir in broth, bay leaf and marmalade or jelly.
8. Add the brisket, turning it over once or twice in the seasoned cooking liquid.
9. Cover, and program to high pressure for 90 minutes.
10. Once 90 minutes are completed, unplug the cooker (do not use the "keep warm" mode). Let the cooker reduce pressure naturally — lid still locked — for 40 minutes.
11. Open the lid so that the steam vents away from you.
12. Allow the brisket to rest for 3-4 minutes before slicing and serving with the cooking sauce.
- Stovetop model**, follow steps 3 to 9, above.
13. Once high pressure is reached, reduce heat so that it's just hot enough to keep the pressure cooker at high pressure 80-85 minutes.*
14. At end of cooking time, take off the heat and allow to reduce pressure naturally for 30 minutes.
15. If the stovetop cooker still has pressure, keep it locked, move the cooker to the kitchen sink, and run cold water over the closed lid. (See your manufacturer's instructions.)
16. Open the lid so that the steam vents away from you.
17. Allow the brisket to rest for 3-4 minutes before slicing and serving with the cooking sauce.



On the other hand, electronic cookers are programmable and often multifunctional, allowing you to use them as ricers, steamers, yogurt makers, and slow cookers. For most recipes, you can set the time and walk away.



Variations

- Instead of marmalade or jalapeño jelly, add a minced chipotle in adobo.
- Omit the jelly or marmalade, and instead serve the brisket with chimichuri or basil pesto.
- Omit wine and increase broth to 1 1/4 cup.
- Once cooked, move the brisket from the pot to a warm platter and cover lightly with aluminum foil. Bring the cooking liquid in the pot back up to a simmer to reduce by a quarter or a third. You might want to whisk in a light corn starch slurry. Allow to simmer 5 minutes. Slice and serve the brisket with the reduced sauce.

Note

- Be sure that there's at least 1 cup liquid in the pot before bringing up to pressure.