

WHAT'S COOKING



by the Culinary Staff, Certified Angus Beef LLC

The brined and the beautiful

Lots of folks love corned beef (and/or pastrami), but few have had the satisfaction of making it from scratch. We're talking brining, baby — the magnificent process of giving beautifully marbled beef a long, relaxing soak in a tub of salty, seasoned goodness before cooking. While plenty of cuts can do the trick, we're sticking with brisket, the traditional choice for brining.

Here's how you do it

Start by separating a whole brisket along the seam, into the point or the flat. The point is especially full of intramuscular marbling, while the flat is leaner and a bit easier to slice. No matter which piece you choose (or maybe you decide to make both), a seriously good meal is ... well, about a week away.

Yes, brining requires patience, but we all know deep down that the best things come to those who wait; and brining is a process not to be rushed. As for the brine itself, it's part science and part art.

A proper brine requires water, salt and sugar, along with a specific measure of Instacure #1 (aka Prague powder or sodium nitrite). The brine is also home to seasonings and spices, like the traditional bay leaves, coriander and mustard seeds, cinnamon, allspice and peppercorns.

Once the brisket's soak in the tub is over, it's decision time: corned beef or pastrami? Both are brined before cooking, but most often, the flat is used for corned beef and boiled or braised, while the point can be rubbed generously with cracked black pepper before being smoked and brought to the table as pastrami.

The decision's up to you, but we assure you the outcome is fantastic any way you slice it.

Made-from-scratch Pastrami Brisket

Ingredients:

- 1 (3½ to 4-lb.) CAB® brisket flat
- 3 quarts water, divided
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- ⅔ cup kosher salt
- 1 Tbs. curing salt, Instacure #1 (also known as Prague powder or saltpeter)



- 2 tsp. whole coriander seeds
- 2 tsp. yellow mustard seeds
- 2 tsp. black peppercorns
- 1 tsp. red chili flakes
- 1 cinnamon stick, crushed in pieces
- 8 whole allspice berries
- 3 bay leaves, hand-crushed
- 2 Tbs. ground black pepper

Instructions:

1. In a large stockpot combine 1½ quarts water, brown sugar, kosher salt, Instacure, coriander, mustard seeds, peppercorns, chili flakes, cinnamon, allspice and bay leaves. Bring to a boil to dissolve salt and sugar. Remove from heat. Add remaining 1½ quarts of water in the form of ice and water to chill brine quickly. Cool to below 40° F.
2. Lay brisket in a large container. Cover with brine. Cover tightly and refrigerate for 6 days, turning every 2 days.
3. Prepare smoker to a low temperature (200°-225°) with wood such as apple and hickory.
4. Remove brisket from brine and rinse; discard brine. Season evenly on all sides with ground pepper.
5. Smoke on low for 7 hours until brisket's internal temperature reaches 150°. Wrap pastrami with two large sheets of aluminum foil and continue cooking until internal temperature reaches 185°, approximately 2 hours.
6. Allow pastrami to rest 30 minutes, remaining wrapped. Slice thinly across the grain to serve. 

Serves 8-10.



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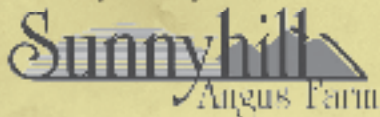
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