

# What's Cooking at CAB

With Jennifer Schertz

## You should take up smoking ... brisket on a gas grill

*I'm no professional chef — just a pretty good home cook who loves to experiment in the kitchen. Thanks to my role on the Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) team, many of my creations involve beef. I've braised short ribs and simmered stews, seared steaks, grilled burgers, roasted prime ribs, stir-fried sirloin, mixed meatballs (and meatloaves) and stuffed roulades. There was one frontier I had yet to cross ... I'd never smoked a brisket.*

### Dinner party

I love barbecue! Real barbecue, smoked “low and slow” over fragrant wood, infusing the meat with its inimitable essence, rendering it tender and juicy and ... [contented sigh]. However, I had always left it up to the experts, lacking confidence and talking myself out of it every time the idea dared to present itself.

No more. I decided not to let doubts get between me and a giant slab of delectable brisket that needed to be checked off my culinary bucket list. It's fairly inexpensive, so no matter what, it wasn't going to break the bank.

So, with my game face on, I invited a group of 10 for a late-summer brisket dinner, planned for 6 or 6:30. I wanted to get the brisket going early in the morning, estimating 12 hours. Needless to say, 5 o'clock came earrrrrrrrrrrrly.

I'd seasoned and refrigerated my brisket the night before with a mix of salt, pepper and a few other “secret” seasonings. All right, garlic powder, onion powder, paprika and cumin, but I just threw it together in a bowl. I'd also soaked my wood chips in water all night, so they'd gently smoke and not burn.

After I got my smoker box ready — a handy little metal contraption perforated with holes to let the wood chips release their magic once they heat up — I went out to light the gas grill. No, it's not a true smoker, so my plan was to use only one burner to heat the metal box of wood chips. The brisket was placed on the unlit portion of the grill, with the gentle heat circulating around it.

**Flavorful, juicy and tender, the brisket had indeed picked up that wonderful smoked essence — the perfect complement to the naturally robust beef taste.**

Everything in place, I walked away feeling good — and hungry already.

Checking 30 minutes later, I saw the burner was generating the target 250° F, but there was no smoke. So I lifted the grill grate and put the box directly on the burner shields. That could have worked, but the narrow box wouldn't balance, so I put the chips in a larger aluminum pan and covered it with a (previously unused) broiler-pan insert. I could have just covered the pan with foil and poked a few holes in it.

I checked every half hour or so for 10 hours, but apart from adding more wood chips a few times, it took care of itself until the moment of truth: Removing the brisket from the grill, I covered it in foil and let it rest for 25 minutes.

Then I sharpened my knife, took a deep breath and began. “Slices good,” I thought. “Smells good. Looks good.” By the time I got around to serving myself a plate, the reviews had started to come in from the group. The crowd was pleased, and I have to say, I was pleasantly surprised. Flavorful, juicy and tender, the brisket had indeed picked up that wonderful smoked essence — the perfect complement to the naturally robust beef taste.

Next time, I'll start even earlier and let it smoke longer, making it even more tender. I think I can tinker with the seasoning, too; there was a tiny bit too much pepper for my liking, although it did help create a wonderful savory crust. While I was pleased with my ability to adapt the gas grill for this technique, the barbecue pros are definitely onto something with their dedicated smokers.

For related recipes, search “brisketrecipes” at <http://recipes.certifiedangusbeef.com>.



**Editor's Note:** Jennifer Schertz is senior communications and media manager for Certified Angus Beef LLC.