

OLD-FASHIONED, SLOW-COOKED BEEF BRISKET

For me, lean cuts of beef offer little in the way of flavour and are expensive. On the other hand, a meltingly flavoursome, slow-cooked beef brisket and buttery mash is just what a body needs at the end of a long day – and it won't break the bank!

Slow cooking is so obviously the new fast food, saving you time and energy; just chuck it all in slow cooker, or a covered oven-proof pot (I use my clay pot) in the morning – and come back home to love in your kitchen!

Brisket is an old fashioned and undervalued cut, but please don't be frightened of it. The secret is to give it time – the lower and slower the better – and to keep it moist and well covered. Brisket is full of beefy goodness, which melts into the surrounding broth; and it's even better if you can get the brisket on the bone – the minerals and other nutrients from the cut will leach into the already nutrient-dense bone broth braising liquid. That's Heaven, I'd say!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

Coconut oil: 2-3 tbsp (or extra virgin olive oil)
Beef brisket: 1.5kg (grass-fed, on the bone if available)
White onions: 600g (thickly sliced)
Carrots: 2 large (thickly sliced)
Celery: 2 sticks (thickly sliced)
Garlic: 2 cloves (thinly sliced)
Paprika: 1 tbsp
Chopped tomatoes: 1 x 400g tin
Collagen hydrolysate: 2 tbsp
Molasses: 1 tbsp (or organic sugar, maple/date syrup)
Bone broth: 750ml (or enough to almost cover the meat)
Sea salt: 1 tbsp (Maldon or Cornish, to taste)
Black pepper: 1 tsp (freshly ground, to taste)

Arrowroot powder (optional, for thickening)
English mustard: 1 tbsp (optional, for finishing)
Molasses: 1 tbsp (optional, for finishing)

WHAT TO DO:

Heat a deep sauté pan, over medium heat with the coconut/olive oil. Add the onions and cook on medium-low to medium heat, stirring frequently, for about 10 minutes or until the onions have caramelised lightly. Set aside.

Repeat Step 1 with the carrots and celery. Return the onions to the pan, add the spices and liquid ingredients to the veg and bring up to a simmer. Pour the mixture into the inset of a slow cooker.

Meanwhile, take the brisket out of its packaging and pat it dry. Season the meat generously with salt and pepper.

Heat the sauté pan over medium-high heat and add a tbsp of coconut oil and turn on your vent or fan, if you have one. Sear the brisket on all sides until the crust golden brown.

Nestle the brisket into the veg, fatty side up. Pile the veg over the meat.

Oven Instructions:

Cook in a covered casserole dish, terracotta brick or in a Dutch oven. Start at 190°C/Gas 8 for 20 mins and then reduce heat for to 125-130°C/Gas 3 for 5 hours, or until very, very tender.

If you like a well-browned top, place the brisket on a baking sheet and mix English mustard, salt and a little molasses and spread it over the top of the brisket. Place under a medium - hot fan assisted grill until browned to your liking.

Slow cooker instructions:

Cover and cook in the slow cooker on LOW for 6 to 8 hours or until the brisket is very tender. Let rest for at least 20 minutes before serving in the slow cooker set on WARM. If your slow cooker doesn't have a WARM setting, transfer to a warmed, enclosed baking dish while resting.

Always allow the meat to rest for 20 mins, well covered, in a warm place before using.

The brisket can be sliced or shredded immediately and served with the vegetables and juices. Or let the meat cool then refrigerate overnight.

If you like thick gravy, carefully strain off the juices into a saucepan. Mix arrowroot to a smooth paste with a little water. Heat the juices, add the paste and whisk well until the sauce has thickened.

To reheat:

Heat the oven to 120°C/Gas 2. Transfer the brisket and all its juices to a baking dish and cover tightly with a lid. If whole, re-heat for 1 hour, or until hot all the way through. The exact time will depend greatly on the size and shape of the brisket; cut it into smaller servings or slices for faster reheating.