

COOK'S ILLUSTRATED

Barbecued Beef Brisket for a Gas Grill

Serves 18 to 24. Published November 3, 2006.

Cooking a whole brisket, which weighs about 10 pounds, may seem like overkill. However, the process is easy, and the leftovers keep well in the refrigerator for up to 4 days. (Leave leftover brisket unsliced, and reheat the foil-wrapped meat in a 300-degree oven until warm.) Still, if you don't want to bother with a big piece of meat or if your grill has fewer than 400 square inches of cooking space, barbecuing brisket for less than a crowd is easy to do. Simply ask your butcher for either the point or flat portion of the brisket, whichever cut you prefer. Then follow the master recipe, reducing the spice rub by half and grill-smoking for 1 1/2 hours. Wrap the meat tightly in foil and reduce its time in the oven to 2 hours. No matter how large or small a piece you cook, it's a good idea to save the juices the meat gives off while in the oven to enrich the barbecue sauce. Hickory and mesquite are both traditional wood choices with brisket.

Spicy Chili Rub

- 4 tablespoons paprika
- 2 tablespoons [chili powder](#)
- 2 tablespoons ground cumin
- 2 tablespoons [dark brown sugar](#)
- 2 tablespoons [table salt](#)
- 1 tablespoon [ground oregano](#)
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon ground white pepper
- 2 teaspoons cayenne pepper

Brisket

- 1 whole beef brisket (point and flat cut together), 9 to 11 pounds, fat trimmed to 1/4-inch thickness
- 3 cups barbecue sauce (store-bought if preferred)
- 2 cups wood chips

Instructions

1. **For Spicy Chili Rub:** Mix all ingredients in small bowl.
2. Apply dry rub liberally to all sides of brisket; wrap tightly in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 2 and up to 48 hours.
3. **For Brisket:** About 1 hour prior to cooking, remove the brisket from the refrigerator, unwrap, and let it come up to room temperature. Soak the wood chips in cold water to cover for 30 minutes and drain. Place them in a foil tray, (see illustration below).
4. Place the tray on top of the primary burner. Light all the burners and turn to high, cover, and heat until the chips are smoking heavily, about 20 minutes. Scrape the cooking grate clean with a grill brush. Turn the primary burner down to medium and turn off the other burner(s). Position the brisket, fat side up, over the cooler part of the grill. Cover and barbecue for 2 hours. (The temperature inside the grill should be a constant 275 degrees; adjust the lit burner as necessary.)
5. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 300 degrees. Attach 2 pieces of heavy-duty foil, 4 feet long, by folding the long edges together 2 or 3 times, crimping tightly to seal well, to form an approximately 4 by 3 foot rectangle. Position the brisket lengthwise in the center of the foil. Bring the short edges over the brisket and fold down, crimping tightly to seal. Repeat with the long sides of the foil to seal the brisket completely. (See illustrations below.) Place the brisket on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake until the meat is fork-tender, 3 to 3 1/2 hours.
6. Remove the brisket from the oven, loosen the foil at one end to release steam, and let rest for 30 minutes. If you like, drain the juices into a bowl (see illustration) and defat the juices in a gravy skimmer.
7. Unwrap the brisket and place it on a cutting board. Separate the meat into two sections and carve it on the bias across the grain into long, thin slices (see illustrations). Serve with plain barbecue sauce or with barbecue sauce that has been flavored with up to 1 cup of the defatted brisket juices.

Step-by-Step

Key Steps to Barbecued Brisket



1. Apply the dry rub generously to the brisket, pressing down to make sure the spices adhere. The meat should be completely obscured by the rub.



2. Wrap the grilled brisket in two 4-foot sections of heavy-duty foil that have been sealed together.



3. Seal foil sections together crosswise, then fold the sides of the foil packet tightly up against the sides of the meat.



4. When the brisket comes out of the oven, use potholders or oven mitts to lift the baking sheet and carefully pour the juices into the bowl. If you like, reserve the juices and defat. They make a delicious addition to barbecue sauce.



5. Since the grain on the two sections of the brisket goes in opposite directions, separate the two cuts before slicing.



6. Carve the brisket into thin slices, going against the grain on the diagonal.

Step-by-Step

Making a Wood Chip Tray



1. Make a 1-inch fold on one long side of a 12 x 18-inch piece of heavy-duty foil. Repeat three more times and turn the fold up to create a sturdy side that measures about 1 inch high. Repeat the process on the other long side.



2. With a short side facing you, fold in both corners as if wrapping a gift.



3. Turn up the inside inch or so of each triangular fold to match the rim on the long sides of the foil tray.



4. Lift the pointed end of the triangle over the rim of foil and fold down to seal. Repeat the process on the other short side.



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