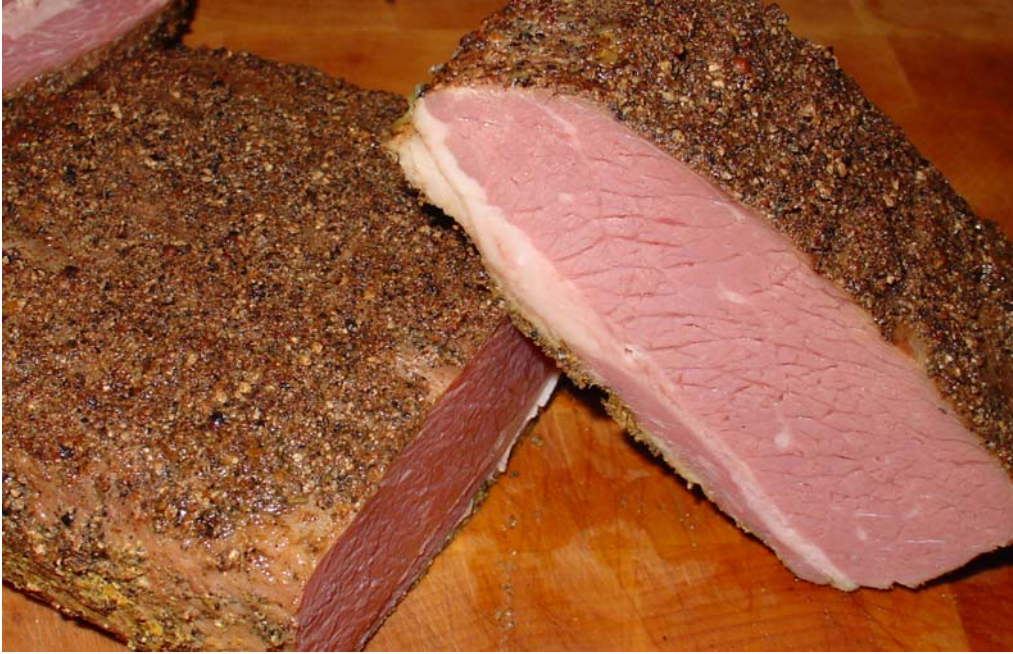


Menu Du Jour

13 Jul 2004

*Homemade Pastrami
& Grilled Sweet Onions*



Homemade Pastrami

If you like pastrami and can smoke-cook a brisket, here's a method for making homemade pastrami that will equal or surpass any store-bought product. Pastrami is traditionally made by curing a beef brisket or bottom round in a brine solution for about a week and then slowly smoking. For this method, a corned beef brisket is used to eliminate the lengthy brining process.

A seasoning blend and dry rub flavors the brisket before it is cooked. Once cooked, the meat is thinly sliced, pan-fried, and piled on Rye bread or French rolls with grilled sweet onions.

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1 (4-pound) corned beef flat

For the seasoning

1/4 cup cracked black pepper
2 tablespoons granulated garlic
2 tablespoons ground coriander
1 tablespoon dry mustard

For the dry rub

3 tablespoons cracked black pepper
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon granulated garlic
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
2 teaspoons hot Hungarian paprika

6 – 8 tablespoons yellow mustard, divided
8 – 10 pounds natural lump charcoal
3 cups hickory wood smoke chips, soaked in cold water at least 30 minutes
3 cups mesquite wood smoke chips, soaked in cold water at least 30 minutes
8 – 12 slices Russian rye bread or
4 – 6 French rolls

Make seasoning:

Mix ingredients in small bowl to blend.

Make dry rub:

Mix ingredients in small bowl to blend.

Place brisket on work surface, and trim fat cap to an even 1/4-inch thickness. Place brisket on a large baking sheet and brush with three to four tablespoons of yellow mustard. Sprinkle seasoning mix evenly over the brisket. Wrap with food film and refrigerate at least two days.

After two days, remove brisket from refrigerator and rinse off seasoning mix. Soak the brisket in cold water, changing the water every two hours, for at least eight hours (this is necessary to reduce the saltiness of the corned beef). Dry the brisket and again coat with three to four tablespoons of yellow mustard. Evenly coat the brisket with the dry rub.

Using lump charcoal and one cup drained hickory wood chips in a vertical smoker, start fire and bring the temperature of the smoker to 225° F. Place brisket on rack. Close smoker and smoke until the brisket reaches an internal temperature of 165° F. adding wood chips and charcoal as necessary to maintain temperature and smoke. (Total cooking time will vary depending on the heat of the smoker and the size of the brisket.)

When the brisket reaches an internal temperature of 165° F., wrap brisket in heavy duty aluminum foil and refrigerate. (The brisket may be cooked two day ahead.) When the brisket is cool enough to handle, slice it thinly using a serrated knife or heavy duty mandolin.

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In a large sauté pan over medium heat, pan-fry pastrami until warmed through. Pile a six- to eight-ounce serving on grilled Rye bread or a split French roll and top with grilled onions. Serve with cole slaw, deep-fried onion rings, and a half-sour pickle.

Serves four to six, depending on serving size.

Times & Temperatures

<i>Time</i>	<i>Rack</i>	<i>Meat</i>	
1050	235	84	
1120	228	107	
1150	222	125	Added two cups hickory chips
1220	212	132	
1250	233	138	
1320	212	136	Added two cups mesquite chips
1420	222	138	
1450	224	140	Added two cups mesquite chips
1520	231	140	
1550	233	143	
1620	230	147	Added two cups mesquite chips
1650	226	154	
1720	225	157	
1750	228	161	
1820	225	164	
1850	225	168	

Weather (11 a.m.): 73° F. (23° C.) Wind: SSW 8 mph

Grilled Sweet Onions

2 large sweet onions (Vidalia, Maui, or Walla Walla)
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
Coarse kosher salt and cracked black pepper to taste

Peel onions and remove a thin slice from the top and bottom of each onion. Using an apple corer or paring knife, carefully cut out the centers of each onion. Make four cuts about 3/4 of the way through each onion. Place a tablespoon of butter in each hollow; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Wrap each onion in foil and grill or smoke, covered, over low coals, about one hour or until tender.

Remove from grill or smoker and slice.
