

"Cow Chip Chipped Beef" and "S.O.S."

Hi Smoke Addicts!

Here's a fun project for those of you who wish to try some "Chipped Beef". It's much like Bresaola, but it is "dry-cured" and not as heavily spiced.

Ol' timers in the U.S. military will perhaps remember something commonly called S.O.S. That was... uh... "stuff" on a shingle! These days, the real thing is not even available on the market although you can buy a beef product in a bottle that is supposed to resemble it. The Pennsylvania Dutch butcher shops make pretty respectable "chipped beef" where their dried beef is smoked and sliced very thinly. Here in the west, I grew up with it often served on the ranch where My Aunt made the best "S.O.S." around by quickly heating a little chipped beef and a bit of onion in butter, then making a roux with flour. A little milk and sour cream was added and presto... a thick, white, nectar was poured over the top of a couple of "shingles" of toasted bread. It was delicious.

Rytek Kutas ate the stuff while he served his country in the Korean War and when he settled in Las Vegas, he developed his "dried beef" recipe using a brining solution of only water, Cure #1, salt, and powdered dextrose. However, some folks preferred their "S.O.S." made with a hand-rubbed "bresaola" or Italian Dried Beef made with a few added spices, including garlic and ground cloves.

On the ranch, we kept it simple but hand-rubbed the stuff. We used fat-free beef "round" or "sirloin" – ten pounds at a time - rubbed with the following dry-rub ingredients.

- 10 lbs. beef (round or sirloin is ideal)
- 7 Tblspns. non-iodized salt
- 1-1/2 Tblspns Cure #2 (NOT Cure#1)
- 1-1/2 Tblspns ground black pepper
- 1 Tblspn. sugar
- 1 Tblspn. Garlic Powder

Mix all the dry ingredients together to make a "rub" for the beef and remove all fat and silver skin from the meat. Rub half the mixture into the meat and place it into a lug or vac-sealed bag at 38°F (or as near as possible). Place the remaining mixture out of the way of children. After the meat has been in the refrigerator three days, drain the liquid in the container and rub the remaining dry-curing mixture into the meat. Place the meat back into the refrigerator three more days, and then rinse the excess curing mixture from the surface of the meat. Pat the meat dry and stuff it into a suitable synthetic casing for smoking. Smoke the meat for 10 to 12 hours in a stockinette at 100°F and then hang it up four weeks at 52°F. to 55°F. to dry completely. When the meat has lost 35% of its original weight, slice it very thinly to serve. Try paper-thin roll ups dipped into a little mustard or try making your own S.O.S.

Best Wishes,
Chuckwagon