

“Pastrami Summer”

A Collection of Pastirma and Pastrami Recipes

(with thoughts on air-drying meats, and with a Corned Beef recipe thrown in)

Pastirma, a fermented, air-dried whole-muscle meat, evolved into a cured, smoked and cooked meat called pastrami as its practitioners moved west. Read on for recipes.

[Ed. Note: (1/2016) I rushed this into publication before I had a chance to try these recipes. Normally, we don't like to do that sort of thing at SausagesWest.com, but they all look so good that I felt compelled to get them out there. I cannot vouch for the first two pastirma recipes, but I trust Stan Marianski's work completely.

I will add a note as soon as I can free up my fermenting/curing equipment and try the two. I do not have a suitable open air place to air-dry pastirma the traditional way. As to the pastrami recipes, Phil “Shuswap” Clark's work is solid. “Meathead” Goldwyn's website has been around for years, and appears to be reliable. ...looks like I have some good, tasty testing ahead of me. ...tough life, huh?]

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Introduction:

“Pastrami Summer” (“pastirma yazi”), our tour guide called it. The second week in November, 2015, my wife and I arrived in Istanbul, Turkey, badly jet-lagged, dressed in warm clothing... and sweltering. That's what Turks call the weather phenomenon that we in the US call “Indian Summer.”

(See <http://www.calciumproducts.com/resources/research-and-development/test-plot-results/item/558-fsf-indian-summer/558-fsf-indian-summer> for a short explanation.)

Our guide said that that time of the year, her Armenian relatives traditionally make pastrami, but the weather is too warm, the temperature ruins it. Read on for recipes, from which you can see why it goes bad- - pastirma, as they call it, ferments at 75 to 85 degF or so for a week or a bit more, then loses weight as it dries at 60 degF. It's a race between good bacteria and bad bacteria, and if it's too warm, the bad guys win.

Pastirma & Pastrami Background:

Let's quote some information from the internet for a little background. A short note by Elizabeth Palermo, at <http://www.livescience.com/45610-what-is-pastrami.html>, says:

“A popular menu item at delis and restaurants in North America, pastrami is a brisket (or other cut) of beef that has been cured in a mixture of sugar, spices and garlic and then smoked before cooking. While many people associate this savory meat with their favorite New York-style deli, the recipe for pastrami actually originated in southeastern Europe.

"Pastirma" (Turkish for pastrami) is believed to have first been cooked up in Kayseri, a town in the east of Turkey, during the rise of the Ottoman Empire (between the 13th and 15th centuries). Legend has it the horsemen of that region preserved their meat by curing it and then

hanging it down from their saddles and pressing on it with their legs as they rode. "Pastirma," as it turns out, is derived from the Turkish word "bastirmak," which means "to press."

"Pastirma eventually spread with the Ottomans to Europe, where it became particularly popular with Jewish communities in countries like Armenia and Romania. However, while traditional Turkish pastirma was made with pork or mutton, Jewish cooks prepared the dish with beef to keep within Kosher laws.

"When European Jews began immigrating en masse to the United States in the later half of the nineteenth century, they brought pastirma with them. It's speculated that the name "pastrami"—which wasn't used until the meat got to the U.S.— was adopted to make the product sound similar to "salami," which was already a popular deli meat at the time."

What I seek to do here is assemble a few pastirma and pastrami recipes for comparison.

PART 1 - PASTIRMA

Pastirma Recipe #1:

This internet post by a young lady from Istanbul is charmingly written, yet thorough. I have been tempted to “clean up” the English a bit, but have resisted because... well... it’s charming as-is. My additions to her write-up are noted [\[this way.\]](#)

According to Wikipedia,

“In French, the word **entrecôte** denotes a premium cut of beef used for steaks. A traditional entrecote comes from the rib area, corresponding to the steaks known in different parts of the English-speaking world as rib, rib-eye, club, Scotch fillet, or Delmonico.”

Pastirma

By Kutadkubilik of Istanbul, Turkey

<http://www.groupprecipes.com/95661/pastirma.html>

Ingredients

- 2 l/b fillet, steak (bonfile, entrecote)(its from back)
- 1/2 cup fenugreek(cemen seeds ,gorunded)
- 5/8 cup good quality sweet red pepper
- 1/8 cup good quality hot red pepper
- ½ cup garlic (without skin)
- 1 a lots of salt (ground sea salt)
- 2 t spoon cummin



How to make it

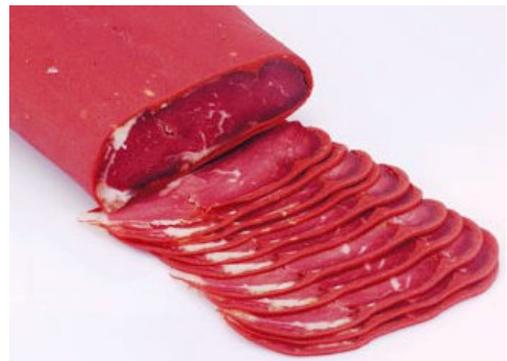
Çemen s prepare (pastirma spice)

mesh all garlcs very fine ..add to peppers ,grass length[?] and 2 cups water and cummin stir very well ..(we gonna use this cemen for cover the meat..)

(feels must be like mash potato)

Directions

1. clean your antrekot meat remove all animals oil all around wash with water very well .place to fitler [\[vessel for draining\]](#) set aside and wait until blood and water comes out .
2. once again wash with water after that all around cover with salt and place some big casserole tray .we need to seperad water and bllod from meat .for help that put someting heavy and big stuff on the meat .before cover some plastic strech and than put your heavy stuff on the meat ..tray must be stay carved [\[covered\]](#).u have to remove to water and blood every morning. Couple of days later if salt is dissolved u should covered with salt again .it will take 14/15 days
3. after meat witout blood and water its ready to prepare.wash it water and remove for salt place [\[in\]](#) a pot with water and wait over a night..



4. after this day wash again and to establish with clean kitchen cloth .press with this cloth 2 sides you should hang your pastırma some cool dry place ceiling will be good .(.for that use a needle quilt with thread and hang on ceiling)
5. meat like that has to wait 1-2 days.some times u should press with your hands and check.. is it feels dry but not hard,
6. after 2 days later I cover with cemen (pastırma spice) verywell .u shuld hang it that some place windy maybe balkony .if its sunny 2-3 days enough , check with your hands (çemen gettin sticky and when u press u must has to feel meat s softness)
7. cover with clean cloth and put in a plastic bag (for smell),
8. and happy and... u can thin sliced and use what every u want (its has to be in fridge).borek,bean,with egg almost everything.. [Borek: family of baked filled pastries made of a thin flaky dough known as phyllo (or yufka), found in the cuisines of the former Ottoman Empire.]

Notes on Pastırma Recipe #1:

1. A lean cut of meat should be used. Fatty cuts do not do well in this recipe because the fat will go rancid.
2. Bulk salt is used. Note that, if the salt dissolves (which it will, in places), add more.
3. The process removes blood, salts the meat, lets it naturally ferment, then flavors it.
4. Hanging the meat, it is recommended to protect it from insects (more about this later). Cheesecloth or a ham bag would be appropriate.
5. At the end, store in a plastic bag, refrigerated.

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Pastırma Recipe #2:

This recipe was written down by a U.S. resident to record a roommate's recipe, with a nice explanation. The advice on mold and how to handle it is excellent.

Pastırma

By Davik of Lansing, MI

<http://www.groupprecipes.com/130890/pastırma.html>

It's getting cooler, which means this is the time to start curing meat, and this one is a rich, spicy, delicious cured beef common among many of the countries that made up the Ottoman empire. It originated in Armenia and is very common in Turkey, though I was originally introduced to it by an Egyptian roommate in undergrad.

Ingredients

- A roughly 2 lb piece of beef like inside round. You want it to be fairly lean and with the grain of the meat running along the axis of the meat; you could use something like tenderloin if you want to shell out the money, but you don't want something thin like brisket. See note 1.
- salt for curing, you're looking for about a ten to one mix of kosher salt to pink salt* (see note 2)

Seasoning:

- 4 T red pepper powder (a mix of paprika and cayenne to taste)
- 1/2 t salt
- 1-2 t black pepper, ground
- 1/2 T cumin

- 3 T methi (fenugreek) seeds, ground
- 1 t allspice, ground
- 3-4 cloves garlic, crushed

Note one: this is a piece of meat that's going to hang at close to room temperature for a month, and likely won't be cooked, so get the good stuff. Don't just get stuff from the supermarket, but find yourself a good butcher and get to know them so you know you're getting quality meat.

Note two: You'll occasionally hear stuff about how nitrites aren't safe (and pink salt is 6.25% sodium nitrite), but in small quantities it's just fine and occurs naturally in food we eat. More importantly, it inhibits the growth of botulism. I don't do any curing outside of short cures in the fridge without nitrite, and I wouldn't do any multi-month cures without nitrate.

How to make it

- Trim the meat, then thoroughly coat the meat with the curing salt. Put in a dish and cover with plastic wrap before weighting down and refrigerating for 3-4 days. Turn the meat once a day, and when the time is up it should be fairly solid to the touch.
- When done, rinse the meat, soak it for 20-30 minutes, then thoroughly dry it.
- Run a piece of string through a corner of the meat, then hang it up to dry in a cool place (60 F, ~60% humidity) for two weeks. Check it regularly, and if any white or green mold is starting, scrub the whole thing down with white vinegar. If black mold forms, or if the mold recurs, pitch the whole thing (I've never had this happen, but better to be safe). Some recipes call for wrapping in cheese cloth, but that's just asking for mold.
- After those two weeks, mix the seasoning together with enough water to make a thick paste, then rub it all over the meat. Hang it to dry for another two weeks.
- At this point you're ready to eat, just slice it thinly and chow down (yeah, the dried seasoning mix will crumble off, but it's imparted its flavor); alternatively, sautéing some up in a skillet then scrambling some eggs with it would be a traditional use.

Notes on Pastirma Recipe #2:

1. Balance the risk of mold with the risk of insects laying eggs on the meat. Both can be scrubbed off if caught early. Insect eggs can hatch into maggots, which can also be handled but... yuk!
2. Store in a container or plastic bag in the refrigerator.

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Pastirma Recipe #3

Here's a recipe from Stan Marianski's website, <http://www.meatsandsausages.com/hams-other-meats/pastirma>. Note that this one uses Cure #2, which is good for air-dried cuts of cured meat. Marianski has a long, distinguished background in meat processing. This is good advice.

Pastirma

Pastirma or bastirma is a highly seasoned, air-dried cured beef that is produced and consumed in a wide area of Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Though beef is the most common meat today, various meats are also used, including camel, pork, lamb, goat, and water buffalo, with camel being the most prized. Pastirma is prepared by salting the meat, then washing it with water and letting it dry for 10-15 days. The blood and salt is then squeezed out of the meat which is then covered with a cumin paste

prepared with crushed cumin, fenugreek, garlic, and hot paprika, followed by thorough air-drying. Depending on the variety of the paprika, it can be very spicy but not quite as hot as, for example, hot chili.

<u>Meats</u>	<u>Metric</u>	<u>US</u>
• beef	1000 g	2.20 lb.

Ingredients per 1000g (1 kg) of meat

- salt 25 g 4 tsp.
- Cure #2 5.0 g 1 tsp.
- black pepper 2.0 g 1 tsp.
- fenugreek seeds 26 g 7 tsp.
- cumin 4.0 g 2 tsp.
- garlic, powdered 6.0 g 2 tsp.
- red pepper 2.0 g 1 tsp.

Instructions

1. Cut meat into 8 x 3 x 2" slices.
2. Mix salt with Cure #2 and rub the mixture into the meat.
3. Sprinkle some salt in a container and place meat slices on top of one another, separating them with salt. Place a wooden board on top of them and put a weight on top. Pastırma is a noun derived from the verb pastırmak (bastırmak in modern Turkish), which means "to press".
4. Keep for 1 week in refrigerator.
5. Remove meat from the refrigerator and wash with water. Brush off the surface of any salt. Place again in a container for 1 more day, covering meat with a weighted board. This will drain more liquid away.
6. Mix all ingredients adding 1 tsp of salt. Add a little water and make the mixture into a paste (known as çemen).
7. Cover the meat with the paste and hang in a dry, well ventilated area (50-59° F, 10-15° C, 60% humidity). You can use hooks or netting. After about 5 days the paste has dried and Pastırma is ready although it may be further dried.

PART 2 – SOME PROCESS CONSIDERATIONS for AIR-DRYING MEATS

Regarding Air Drying:

We turn, next, to an excellent little book by Steven Lamb, “The River Cottage Curing and Smoking Handbook,” 2014, Ten Speed Press, page 103, where the author offers advice on air drying meats. He notes three factors: humidity (60% - 80%), temperature (50 – 64 degF), and air flow. In typical dry British humorous style, he suggests

“Think porch or outbuilding, or a badly made shed or garage where the air can whistle through. Cellars can work as long as the air isn’t stagnant. The meat must have a flow of air even if it means manufacturing it with a desk fan.”

At this point, we should note that too low humidity or too high air flow can lead to “case hardening,” a condition in which the outer surface of the meat dries too rapidly and forms a dense shell through which moisture has difficulty diffusing.

He cites another hazard- - insects.

“If you just can’t reconcile yourself to the fact that your meat will be left to its own devices outside, there are several ways in which you can “protect” it without negatively altering the process. You could use a jambon sac or cheesecloth wrapped loosely around it. ... If the cheesecloth is wrapped too tightly around the meat, it will still allow flies to lay eggs through it. You could also manufacture a meat safe, ...and I have known people to hang their hams in coarse fish keeping nets. As long as the mesh is small enough, your ham will not get fly eggs on it.

“Even if you do get fly eggs on your ham or other cured meat, it isn’t necessarily a problem. If you spot them in time (look for small, yellow-white clusters), you can easily just wipe them off with a cloth soaked in malt vinegar. A fly wants to lay eggs where it is wet and dark, so they won’t always be in the most open place. If the eggs get to the next stage of development, then you have to confront maggots.

“I have been curing hams like this for years and have had only two incidents with maggots. On the first occasion I was able to remove the small piece of the leg that contained maggots and continued to air dry the ham with great success. The second time, there was no rescuing the leg because the maggots had eaten through to the middle of it. The fly must have laid eggs on the ham even before it was packed in salt. Both hams were hung outside in early spring, so perhaps, in retrospect, I was pushing it a bit, season-wise. Such pitfalls can happen to anyone, but there are any things you can do to help prevent them.”

At this point, he discusses adapting a used refrigerator for curing meat. The equipment must be run at higher-than-normal temperature, air must be circulated, and humidity must be controlled. He recommends leaving a bowl of heavily-salted water (3 parts water to 1 part salt) on the bottom shelf to maintain humidity.

Using Salts to Fix Humidity:

If you look in “Humidity Fixed Points of Binary Saturated Aqueous Solutions,” which you can find at <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.333.7394&rep=rep1&type=pdf>, you will find a compilation and regression analysis of 28 different combinations of various types of inorganic salt-

and-water. Ideally you can find a non-toxic salt which will give the desired humidity, and this is indeed the case:

- Without a salt present, water provides 100% humidity.
- Potassium chloride (KCl, marketed as “light salt,” a salt replacer, in recent years, available at most grocery stores) fixes humidity at 88.6% (0 degC, 32 degF) to 84.3% (30 degC, 86 degF). At 68 degF (20 degC) fermentation conditions, it fixes humidity at 85.3%. At 14 degC drying conditions, it fixes humidity at 85.9%. Therefore, potassium chloride appears to be ideal for meat fermenting needs, but the humidity may be a bit high for drying needs.
- Sodium chloride (NaCl, table salt) fixes humidity at 75.5% at 0 degC, clear up to 75.1% at 30. It is often used for fixing humidity during meat curing and drying, and could be used for storage humidity control. However, vacuum-packing is probably better.

Air Velocity Considerations:

This portion is extracted from an upcoming publication of mine on how to design a sausage and meat fermenting/curing chamber.

This would be a good place to discuss the factors that influence evaporation rate and, therefore, causes of case hardening. As we mentioned, case hardening results when the layer of meat at the surface in contact with air becomes too dry, too dense, restricting outward diffusion of water. We would like to restrict evaporation rate enough that the outer layer stays somewhat moist, and therefore permeable.

You can think of the route that water takes in getting out of the meat in terms of

- Water is generated by fermentation. This is assumed to happen uniformly within the cut of meat or sausage mixture. (highest moisture)
- Water diffuses outward through the inner meat, which is assumed to be uniform in composition (high moisture)
- A small thickness of meat and/or casing may possibly offer added resistance if it becomes drier than the inner mixture. (slightly lower moisture) This can become the controlling resistance in some cases.
- A small thickness of moist air, termed a boundary layer, offers a slight resistance. (lower moisture still, dropping off rapidly) This is the preferred controlling resistance., and is a function of several factors including its thickness, which is controlled by bulk air mixing rate.
- Bulk air composition (lowest moisture), which, if mixed at too great a velocity, strips off the boundary layer, allowing water to evaporate too rapidly from the outer meat layer, which results in case hardening.

There is a resistance to water diffusion flowrate in each of these layers. The largest resistance regulates the overall flowrate, and the others (having lower resistance) just keep up with that rate. Think of a river- - the water jams up at the tight spots, but flows along freely at the wide spots.

Thinking through the above, several important factors can be reasoned.

- Temperature affects water production rate during the fermentation step. It also affects water diffusion rate, but in a minor way. A nice, slow fermentation brought on by the “right” temperature is much more important. Project A (*a recent on-line salami project*) called for a rapid fermentation at 68 degF for 3 days, tapering off to 57 degF for a further three months. This can be thought of as the driving force for the fermentation rate.
- Humidity, or more precisely the humidity gradient, is extremely important to prevent case hardening. Water diffuses from a high concentration within the meat toward a lower

concentration in the bulk air. If the bulk air humidity is too high, diffusion will slow down and the meat or sausage mixture will become soggy from water buildup. On the other hand, if the bulk air humidity is too low, water will diffuse too rapidly, the outer layer of the meat will become too dry, and diffusion will slow down due to case hardening, again making the inner portion of the sausage mushy.

The rule of thumb for Project A salami calls for 85% to 90% relative humidity in the bulk air phase for the first three days, tapering off with slowing fermentation rate to the 80% - 85% humidity range. This can be thought of as the driving force for drying rate. At the end of the period, 30% to 35% of the weight will have been lost, an estimated A_w (water activity) of 65% to 70%, which makes the sausage safe to store and consume.

- One or more boundary conditions exist which, if crossed, can bring ruin. The most significant is the boundary layer resistance, which can be thought of as that layer of air that you can see shimmering above a paved surface on a hot day. The pavement is hottest, the boundary layer of air is a cooler, stagnant layer and is hot enough that it bends (refracts) light, making it look like... well, like there's some sort of layer there (which, in fact, there is). Above the boundary layer, the air is mobile and the light shining through it bends and wavers almost randomly, as if the stuff is flowing (which it is). The air in the bulk phase can flow in all three dimensions (left/right, forward/backward, up/down), but the air in the boundary layer can only flow in the two horizontal directions.

You can break up the boundary layer, or at least make it thinner, by blowing on it. Thus, there is an empirical limit of one mile per hour, established by trial and error, which if you exceed, breaks down the resistance of the boundary layer and makes the outer meat/casing layer dry out too fast. Predicting this number is actually pretty complicated, and is probably subject to a wide range of uncontrolled variables like sausage composition, casing permeability, fineness of grind... (don't ask!) Suffice it to say that if you don't exceed the limit, you should be okay. This can be thought of as the rate-determining resistance for drying rate.

But how do you measure it to make sure that your equipment is okay? Short of sticking a small anemometer into the curing chamber, which you could do in a commercial-scale chamber, you can estimate it, and you can take steps to approximate uniform velocity throughout the chamber...

PART 3 - PASTRAMI

Pastrami Recipes – Introduction:

For comparison with pastirma, we should examine some pastrami recipes to see how pastrami evolved in Eastern Europe and America. As a reminder (repeated from above):

“Pastirma eventually spread with the Ottomans to Europe, where it became particularly popular with Jewish communities in countries like Armenia and Romania. However, while traditional Turkish pastirma was made with pork or mutton, Jewish cooks prepared the dish with beef to keep within Kosher laws.

“When European Jews began immigrating en masse to the United States in the later half of the nineteenth century, they brought pastirma with them. It's speculated that the name "pastrami"—which wasn't used until the meat got to the U.S.— was adopted to make the product sound similar to "salami," which was already a popular deli meat at the time.

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Pastrami Recipe #1:

This recipe is from Stan Marianski's website. Does it represent Eastern European Jewish practice? I don't know. It does seem to differ from popular American practice (see below).

Pastrami

<http://www.meatsandsausages.com/hams-other-meats/pastrami>

Pastrami is a cured smoked beef that was created by the Slavic Jews. It is related to pastrama, a highly seasoned smoked pork that is popular in Romania. The beef version of the product became very popular in the Jewish delicatessens in Europe and was brought to the USA by the Jewish immigrants. The corn in corned beef refers to the corns or grains of coarse salts used to cure it. The slab of beef is typically cured in a heavy, salty brine solution. After beef is removed from brine it is drained and a combination of cracked black pepper and whole coriander is rubbed into it.

Meats Metric US

Beef brisket 1 kg 2.2 lb

Instructions

1. **Curing solution:** 35 degrees SAL (10 Baume), 101 g salt per 1 liter of water Salt, 90 g (5 Tbsp) Cure #1, 18 g (1 Tbsp) Sugar, 10 g (2 tsp) Water, 1 liter
2. **Spice mixture:** Black pepper, cracked, 10 g (1 Tbsp) Coriander seeds, whole or cracked, 10 g (1 Tbsp) Garlic, 3.5 g (1 clove)
3. Mix brine ingredients in warm water, then cool the brine in refrigerator.
4. Pumping meat.
 - a. Pump brisket with 10% curing solution (brisket should weigh 110% of its original weight). Add the remaining brine to cover the meat and cure for 2 days (3-4 days for 2-3 kg meat). OR
 - b. No pumping meat. Cover brisket with brine and cure for 4 days. Use about 4 days per 1 kg of meat.
5. Remove brisket from brine, wash, drain and wipe dry.
6. Coat the brisket with spice mixture. Be generous with your rub, it should be applied in a thick coating.

7. Hang in a preheated to 130° F (54° C) smokehouse (no smoke applied). With dampers fully open, hold at this temperature for about one hour, until meat surface is dry.
8. Re-adjust dampers to 1/4 open and apply light smoke for 2 hours. Raise temperature to 200 - 220° F (93 - 104° C). Cook until an internal temperature of 165°F (74° C) is reached.
9. Hang at room temperature for 1-2 hours. Serve or refrigerate.
10. Pastrami may be dry cured. For 1 kg (2.20 lb.) beef use: Salt, 35 g, 2 Tbsp. Cure #1, 5 g (1 tsp). This comes to 312 ppm of sodium nitrite. The USDA allows 625 ppm for dry curing meat. Sodium nitrite dissipates rapidly, after curing, smoking and cooking not much is left. Note: there is 4.69 g salt in Cure #1
11. Spice mixture: Cracked black pepper, 3 tsp Coriander seeds, 3 tsp. Brown sugar, 2 tsp. Garlic, 1 clove, finely minced
12. Mix salt, cure, and spice mixture together and rub it into the meat. Massage it well and cover the meat's surface evenly.
13. Place meat in a Ziplock plastic bag.
14. Hold in a refrigerator for 5 days, turning the package daily.
15. Remove meat from the package, rinse with cold water, drain, pat dry with paper towel.
16. Make another spice mixture and coat the brisket with it. Be generous with your rub, it should be applied in a thick coating.
17. Smoking/cooking - follow steps 8, 9, and 10.

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Pastrami Recipe #2:

This recipe was published by Phil "Shuswap" Clark and placed in the SausagesWest.com recipe archive. Phil used a 4 pound eye-of-round for his pastrami.

EYE OF ROUND PASTRAMI

<http://sausageswest.com/4-ham-bacon-whole-muscles-preserving-entire-cuts/comment-page-10/#comment-2192>

by Phil "Shuswap" Clark

Used Pop's brine plus 2 T pickling spices simmered in 1 cup water

Brine is:

- 1 gal. cold water
- 1 cup salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 tbsp. DQ Cure (or any #1 cure, but not Tenderquick with salt added)

Inject 10% weight, brine for 10 days

Dry Spice Rub for 4 pounds of corned beef:

- 4 tablespoons fresh coarsely ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons coriander powder
- 1 teaspoon mustard powder
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder



- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil

Make the rub by blending together all the spices. Rinse the meat, pat it dry with paper towels, coat it with the cooking oil, apply the rub liberally and press it into the surface to help it adhere. Put in the fridge for a minimum of 2 days. Don't wrap it. The rub just sticks to the plastic wrap.

Preheat **smoker** to 250F and smoke to 150 Internal Meat Temperature (IMT), then steam in oven at medium high heat to 205 IMT. Tent and rest for 30 minutes. Cut 1/8" slices. If any left fridge overnight then slice by hand, package and freeze excess. Steam for eating.

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Pastrami Recipe #3

The AmazingRibs.com site has been around for quite a few years, and has developed a large following. "Meathead Goldwyn seems to know what he's talking about. I have not personally tried the next two recipes, pastrami and corned beef, seeing as how the methods used to cook brisket at Katz's Deli are close to the method used to cook Central Texas style beef brisket and I prefer that to pastrami. However, the recipes sure look good. You'll find a note from me regarding avoiding the steaming step, based on my experience cooking BBQ brisket. I can guarantee that you'll get a solid crust with my method, but the choice is yours.

"Meathead" offers several opinions about corned beef, et cetera. His advice seems born of experience. As they say, "read and heed." ...and check out his website.

Recipe for "Close to Katz's Pastrami"

http://amazingribs.com/recipes/beef/close_to_katzs_home_made_pastrami.html

by "Meathead" Goldwyn, "AmazingRibs.com"

Makes. About 3 pounds of pastrami after shrinkage, enough for 4 good sandwiches after trimming

Cooking time. 6 hours approximately to smoke a thick 4 pound chunk at 225°F. Actual cooking time depends on thickness not weight. Then it goes into the fridge about 12 hours, and then it steams for about 2 hours. Larger and thicker cuts will take longer.

Ingredients

- 4 pounds of good corned beef, preferably home made (see below for recipe)
- 4 tablespoons fresh coarsely ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons coriander powder
- 1 teaspoon mustard powder
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil



About store bought corned beef. Corned beef comes in two forms, ready to eat, and brined. Ready to eat corned beef is cured, then cooked, and usually packaged in slices or sliced at the deli counter. Do not use this! Brined corned beef is usually a hunk of brisket that has been cured in a salt solution and packaged in a hearty cryovac plastic bag with some of the brine. It has not been cooked yet. That's the stuff you want.

About the rub. The paprika mostly adds color. If you want to veer from the conventional and amp it up a bit, substitute ancho powder or American chili powder, but be careful, the black pepper and mustard supply an ample kick. You can leave anything out that you want except the black pepper and the coriander.

Method

- **Make your own corned beef.** It is just plain better than store-bought. For pastrami, the flat section of the brisket is favored by many because it makes nice even slices for sandwiches, but I prefer the point section of the brisket because it is fattier, richer, and more tender. Yes, it sometimes breaks apart, but who notices on a sammy? It can also be made from flank steak, or leaner cuts, or even from boneless short plate (rib meat). If you are using brisket, one side of the meat will probably have a thick layer of fat on it called the cap. Remove all of the fat cap except about 1/8" and if there is any filmy membrane on the other side, remove it all. That thin layer of fat is important. The process takes about a week.
- **Desalinate.** Put the corned beef in a pot slightly larger than the meat and cover it with cold water in the fridge for at least 8 hours. This removes excess salt. Trust me, you need to do this or you will be gulping water all night after your meal.
- **Rub.** Make the rub by blending together all the spices. Rinse the meat, and while it is damp, apply the rub liberally, about 4 tablespoons per square foot of surface, and press it into the surface to help it adhere. If there is a thin part of meat, use less rub. Put in the fridge for a minimum of 2 days. Don't wrap it. The rub just sticks to the plastic wrap. Normally I say you do not need to let meats marinate in a rub, but the wait seems to help this particular rub adhere.
- **Smoke.** Set up your grill in 2 zones for smoking or set up your smoker. If you can, use a charcoal smoker. It produces a deeper darker crust than any other cooker. Preheat to 225°F. Pick your wood. I don't think it makes a huge difference with all the other flavors banging around in there. My best batch was with cherry wood. Smoke it with indirect heat until it reaches the stall at about 150°F. You can wrap in foil and refrigerate for a week if you wish or proceed to the steaming step.
- **Steam.** If you have a bamboo or metal steamer in which the meat will fit, you can use that. If not, you can make a steamer by putting a wire rack in a baking pan. If necessary you can sit the rack on wads of foil to keep it out of the water. Unwrap the meat and put it on the foil in which it was wrapped or the steam will wash off much of the rub. Do not slice the meat first.

If you made a steamer with a baking pan, cover it with foil. If the pan is steel don't let the foil touch the meat. The salt, the water, the steel, and the aluminum can interact and create electrical charges that can melt the foil! This is a phenomenon called the "lasagna cell" because it happens to lasagna often.

Put the pan on a burner, turn the heat to medium low, and steam it an hour or two until heated through to 203°F. Add hot water as needed, making sure the pan never dries out. Don't rush this. Take it all the way to 203°F.

The crust tends to get soft when you steam. No doubt about it, a hard crust is more appealing. So you can firm the crust by putting it on a hot grill or in the oven or under the broiler for a few minutes. The best crust comes from the full smoke.

The big puzzlement is how does Katz's retain the hard crust even though they boil the meat just before serving. Dr. Blender speculates that they pack the meat in so tight that the crust remains hard. I'm skeptical. *[Ed.Note: You can avoid steaming by keeping the meat wrapped in foil while cooking to 195 degrees F. Then unwrap it and finish by cooking to 205 or so degF. This way, the whole process can be completed in your smoker, if you are observant.]*

- **Slicing.** Slicing is crucial to maximize tenderness. Look at the meat and notice which way the grain is running. Cut it by hand in thin slices, about 1/8" thick, perpendicular to the grain. If you cut parallel to the grain it will be much chewier. Don't try to slice it with a machine. It will just fall apart.
- **Serve.** I serve it nekkid on fresh untoasted rye bread. A good brown mustard on both slices and a few shreds of sauerkraut is nice but not necessary.

Now this is going to sound weird: It may need a light sprinkling of salt. The soaking process occasionally removes too much. So taste it and if you wish, sprinkle it on lightly.

At Katz's they put about 1 pound of meat on each sandwich, and the Carnegie Deli uses even more. That's just too much for me devour without unhinging my jaw. 1/2 to 3/4 pound per sandwich is more than enough for home use.

If you want, you can make a rockin' pastrami Reuben with sauerkraut, melted Swiss, and thousand island dressing. Reubens were originally made with corned beef, but there's no rule that you can't make one from pastrami. In fact, I highly recommend it.

- Leftovers freeze well and they can be reheated in the microwave or steamed. They can also be made into a killer hash.

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Corned Beef Recipe #1:

Recipe for "Home Made Corned Beef"

Edited from http://amazingribs.com/recipes/beef/home_made_corned_beef.html

by "Meathead" Goldwyn, "AmazingRibs.com"

Curing time. 5-7 days

Ingredients

- About 4 pounds of beef brisket
- 1 gallon distilled water



- 8 ounces kosher salt, by weight (about 7/8 cup)
- 2 teaspoons Prague powder #1

Optional ingredients

- 1 cup brown sugar, preferably dark
- 5 tablespoons pickling spices (see below)
- 4 cloves garlic, smashed or pressed

About the beef. Many delis use the fattier navel cut. You can also use boneless short rib meat, flank steak, tongue, or round, but round can be very thick, so cut in into 1.5" planks. For that matter you can use any cut you want, but brisket is my fave.

About the pickling spices. You can buy them premixed or use "Meathead's" mixture, which consists of:

- 2 tablespoons whole black peppercorns
- 3 inches cinnamon sticks, total length
- 2 tablespoon dill seeds
- 1 tablespoon hot red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon mustard seeds, any color
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
- 1 tablespoon celery seeds
- 4 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme leaves
- 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- 2 teaspoons whole allspice berries
- 1 teaspoon whole cloves

Optional

- 1 tablespoon mace
- 1/2 teaspoon cardamom seeds (or 1 tablespoon pods)
- 1 tablespoon juniper berries
- 2 star anise pods

Method

- Find a proper container large enough to handle 1 gallon of brine and the meat.
- Mix the cure ingredients and the distilled water. Stir until they dissolve.
- Take the meat and remove as much fat as possible from the exterior unless you plan to use it for pastrami. In that case, leave a 1/8" layer on one side. Because corned beef is cooked in simmering water, the fat just gets gummy and unappetizing. But if you plan to then make pastrami from it, you will be smoking the meat and in that case the fat gets succulent and lubricates the sandwich. I like to buy a full packer brisket and separate the point from the flat, and cut the flat in half when making corned beef or pastrami. That gives me 3 manageable hunks of 2 to 4 pounds each. If you leave the point attached to the flat beneath, it will be very thick and take longer to cure, and there's an ugly hunk of fat between them.
- Add the meat to the curing solution. It might float, so put a plastic bowl filled with brine on top of the meat until it submerges. The meat will drink up brine so make sure there is enough to cover it by at least 1" or else you'll find the meat high and dry after a few days. Refrigerate. Let it swim for at least 5 days, longer if you wish, especially if the meat is more than 2" thick. You will not likely need more than 7 days, but once it is well cured, it can stay in the brine for another week. Move the meat every day or so just to stir up the cure. When you are done, the exterior of the meat will be pale tan

or gray and if you cut into it, it should not look too different than normal raw meat, just a little pinker.

- Now decide which path you want to follow. You can make traditional corned beef and cabbage boiled dinner, you can make corned beef hash, you can make Reuben sandwiches, or turn it into pastrami.