

Brisket with Tomato Gravy

People usually think that Southern brisket has to be smoked all day and then slathered with barbecue sauce. But I think instead of this recipe, which I made when Bart and I were first married. I wanted to make it extra special and had the butcher help me pick out the perfect cut. I made sure that every ingredient was just right as I added them to the slow cooker in the morning before I left for work, and then looked forward to it all day. That night, I rushed in the door at the same time as Bart, gave him a sassy little smile, and said, “Just you wait for supper! You are going to love me even more!” My heart sank as I walked into the kitchen and saw the electrical cord neatly wound around the cooker, which was cold as ice. Thankfully, I can laugh now, looking back on it, especially since I’ve now made this brisket—successfully—many times!

SERVES 6 TO 8

2½- to 3-pound brisket

5 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into quarters

1 small onion, sliced

4 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

1 tablespoon packed dark brown sugar

1½ teaspoons freshly ground black pepper

1½ teaspoons kosher salt

1 cup chicken stock, homemade (page 104) (recipe not included) or store-bought

1 cup tomato sauce, homemade (page 228) (recipe not included) or store-bought

1 tablespoon cornstarch (optional)

1 Put the brisket in a 6-quart slow cooker. Add the potatoes, onion, and tomatoes.

2 In a small bowl, combine the brown sugar, pepper, salt, chicken stock, and ½ cup of the tomato sauce and pour the mixture over the brisket.

3 Cover and cook on low for 8 hours, or until the meat is fork-tender. Transfer the meat and potatoes to a platter and let rest.

4 Pour the liquid from the slow cooker into a medium saucepan set over medium-high heat. Add the remaining ½ cup tomato sauce and cook until reduced by half, about 10 minutes. If you’d like a thicker gravy, whisk the cornstarch with ¼ cup cold water until smooth; then, whisking constantly, pour into the gravy and continue whisking over the heat for a minute or two to let the gravy thicken. Pour the tomato gravy over the brisket and vegetables, slice, and serve.

freezer friendly

Portion the brisket, vegetables, and gravy equally into sealable freezer bags, removing as much air as possible as you seal. Press flat and freeze for up to 3 months. To serve, thaw in the refrigerator overnight. Reheat in a medium saucepan set over medium heat until warmed through, 15 to 20 minutes.

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