

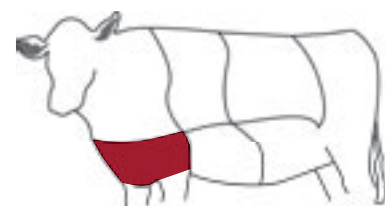


HOMEMADE NITRATE-FREE CORNED BEEF

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 11 HOURS
MAKES: 6 SERVINGS

- 2–3 lb organic beef brisket
- 2 cups water
- 2 bottles beer
- 2 T sugar
- 4 bay leaves
- 1 t peppercorn
- 1 T mustard seeds
- 1 T whole cloves
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- ½ t whole allspice
- 1 whole cinnamon stick
- 6 medium potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 10 shallots, peeled
- 6 carrots, peeled
- 2 parsnips, peeled and quartered
- 1 rutabaga, peeled and quartered
- 1 head green cabbage, cut into wedges
- 3 small turnips
- 4 small beets, with tails and a bit of the crown still attached to prevent bleeding

1. Place a 2–3 lb beef brisket in a 7-quart crockpot; add 2 c water, beer, sugar, and spices.
2. Cover and cook on low for 8–10 hours.
3. Remove brisket from crockpot; strain, and reserve liquid.
4. Preheat oven to 450°F.
5. Place brisket in a large lidded roasting pan and top with vegetables, placing beets on top. Ladle enough reserved liquid into pan until meat is covered, but leave room on top so that broth doesn't bubble over (vegetables will steam-cook).
6. Roast for about 45 minutes, or until potatoes are fork-tender.
7. Before serving, run beets under cool water, cut off tops and bottoms, and slip off skins.



Pairing: In keeping with this dish's Irish theme, try a stout beer like Bison Brewing's Chocolate Stout—rich, roasty, and slightly bitter. www.bisonbrew.com



Traditional corned beef is a brisket that's been cured for weeks in a rock-salt brine as a method of preserving the meat. The “corned” term appears in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as early as 888 A.D., and refers to the large kernels of salt used in the brine. When meat is soaked in a salt solution, the salt causes the coil shapes of the meat proteins to unwind and absorb the water trapped inside them, thereby eliminating places for bacteria to grow. But since we can now preserve our meat with refrigeration, you can simply use the spices and other ingredients that would normally go into the salt brine to just season your brisket. Cooking your beef in a crockpot allows the meat to cook slowly and absorb the most flavor from the spices.

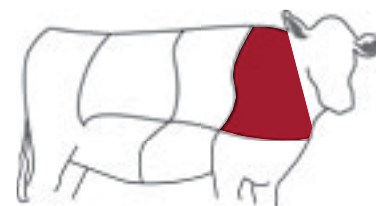


CROCKPOT ROAST BEEF & GRAVY

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 10 HOURS
MAKES: 6 SERVINGS

- 3 lb organic chuck roast
- 6 cups water
- 6 whole potatoes, unpeeled
- 6 shallots, peeled
- 6 garlic cloves, peeled
- salt and pepper to taste
- herb bundle (right)

1. Tie the roast with kitchen string to keep it from falling apart during the long cooking time.
2. Place all ingredients in a 7-quart crockpot. Typically, crockpot recipes have you put the vegetables on the bottom and the meat on the top. For this recipe, place the meat on the bottom, then add the whole potatoes, shallots, garlic, salt, and pepper. Doing this keeps the vegetables from turning to mush. Top with the herb bundle and cook on low for 8–10 hours.
3. To make gravy, carefully remove vegetables and meat with a slotted spoon to a plate. Pour all the liquid into a saucepan, then put meat and vegetables back in the crockpot to keep warm. Take out 2 cups of liquid, put into blender, and cool slightly by adding an ice cube. Blend on medium speed while slowly adding ⅔ cup flour. In the meantime, bring the remaining liquid to a boil and whisk in the thickened blender mixture in a steady stream. Simmer until thickened, stirring constantly. Add salt and pepper to taste.



Pairing: We like the rich, fruity taste of Zinfandel from Frey Vineyards—the first organic winery in the U.S., and now the first certified biodynamic winery. www.freywine.com

Tie fresh herbs (I used bay leaves, thyme, and lovage) into a bundle with kitchen string and place on top of vegetables in the crockpot.

