

SMOKED · ADVANCED

Homemade Pastrami on the Kama-do: Brine-Cured, Hickory-Smoked and Steam-Finished

Beef brisket cured for five to seven days in a brine with curing salt, smoked over hickory at 110 °C and finished in steam until the probe slides in with no resistance. This is not a brisket with spices on it: it is a different dish.



PREP

60 min

COOK

480 min

SERVINGS

12

TEMPERATURE

110 °C

Ingredients

2.5 kg beef brisket (the flat; sold in Spain as "pecho" or "pecho de ternera", and as "brisket" at barbecue butchers), with a 5 mm fat cap

200 g coarse sea salt

1 dosis nitrite curing salt, the exact amount the manufacturer specifies for this brine (0.6 % sal nitrificada replaces the sea salt; a concentrate such as Prague Powder #1 is added to it); do not substitute table salt

4 ud garlic cloves, crushed

1 cda whole allspice berries

4 l water

100 g brown sugar

2 cda yellow mustard seeds, for the brine

3 ud bay leaves

4 cda black peppercorns, coarsely crushed, for the crust

4 cda coriander seeds, coarsely crushed, for the crust

Method

1 MAKE THE BRINE

Bring 1 litre of the water to the boil with the coarse salt (or the sal nitrificada that replaces it), the sugar, the mustard, the garlic, the bay and the allspice. After 5 minutes turn off the heat; if your product is a concentrate added to the salt, stir in the curing salt in the exact amount stated on its packet until it dissolves. Add the remaining 3 litres of cold water and chill in the fridge to 4 °C or below: the meat never touches warm brine.

2 CURE IN THE BAG FOR 5-7 DAYS

Trim the fat cap on the brisket to about 5 mm and remove the silverskin from the lean side. Put the joint into the HIC Kitchen brining bag, pour in the brine with its spices, squeeze out the air and seal. Lay the bag flat on a tray and keep it on the bottom shelf of the fridge, between 0 and 4 °C, for 5 days if the brisket is around 3 cm thick and up to 7 if it reaches 4 or 5 cm. Turn it once a day.

3 DESALT, DRY AND CRUST

Lift out the brisket, discard the brine and rinse the meat under the tap. Submerge it in clean cold water for 2 hours, changing the water after the first hour, to draw the salt off the surface. Pat it thoroughly dry with kitchen paper. Coarsely crush the pepper and coriander for the crust and coat the joint on every face, pressing it on by hand. Leave it uncovered on a rack in the fridge for 12 to 24 hours: the surface dries and the crust sets.

4 BUILD THE MINION FIRE

Empty the ash from the Monolith Classic Pro 2.0 and fill the firebox with BlackSellig coconut briquettes up to the rim of the fire ring, with a hollow in the centre. Scatter 3 or 4 Weber hickory chunks among the unlit briquettes. Set a firelighter in the hollow with 6 to 8 briquettes on top and light it. Fit deflector and drip tray, close the dome and settle at 110 °C with the vents almost closed before the meat goes in: the smoke should run thin and bluish, not white.

5 SMOKE TO 70 °C

Lay the brisket fat side up on the grate and push one Inkbird IBT-26S probe into the centre of the thickest part; rest a second one beside the meat to read the real temperature at grate level. Set the alarm to 70 °C and do not open the dome. At 110 °C this joint usually takes between 4 and 6 hours to get there, but the probe decides, not the clock. When the alarm sounds, take the brisket out.

6 CARRY ON OR HOLD

At 70 °C the pastrami has taken all the smoke it is going to take. You can move straight on to the steam or let it cool for 30 minutes, wrap it in cling film and keep it in the fridge for up to 3 days to finish another day. This pause is an advantage over brisket: it splits the work across two afternoons and the result does not suffer.

7 STEAM-FINISH TO 93-96 °C

Put 3 or 4 cm of water in a wide pot with a rack and bring to the boil. Sit the brisket on the rack, lower the heat to a steady, gentle steam and cover. Top up with boiling water every 45 minutes. From the second hour check with the Inkbird probe, drying it afterwards: the cable joint is not watertight and must not sit in the steam. Carry on to 93-96 °C, when it slides in with no resistance; fridge-cold, the joint needs 2 to 3 hours.

8 CHILL, SLICE AND SERVE

Let the pastrami cool for 30 minutes, wrap it in cling film and keep it in the fridge for at least 12 hours: cold, the crust settles and the meat cuts into 2 mm slices without falling apart. Slice across the grain with a long, very sharp knife. To serve hot, warm only the slices you are about to eat for 2 or 3 minutes in the steam of the same pot. Rye bread, mustard and pickles.

Editor's tips

- Choose a brisket of even thickness. A piece that runs from 2 to 5 cm cures at two speeds: the thin end comes out salty and the thick end reaches the centre raw. If the butcher only has the whole piece, cut off the thin tip and cure it separately for fewer days.
- Taste for salt before crusting: cut a sliver from the edge after the soak, give it 1 minute in a frying pan and taste it. If it tastes like salt cod, another hour in cold water; once smoked, it can no longer be corrected.
- The hickory chunks go on dry and spread out, never heaped on the lit coals: three or four give thin smoke for hours, and a handful more only adds bitterness to the crust.
- No rack for the pot? Three fist-sized balls of aluminium foil will hold the brisket out of the water; and if the joint will not fit whole with the lid on, cut it in two across before steaming: the cut disappears once sliced. What will not do is letting the meat boil: it turns into a stew and loses its crust.

Gear for this recipe

Monolith Classic Pro 2.0

mikamado.es/en/kamados/monolith-classic-pro-2-cart

BlackSellig XXL Pure Coconut Charcoal Briquettes 10 kg

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/blacksellig-coconut-shell-10kg

Weber Hickory Smoking Chunks 1.5 kg

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/weber-tacos-hickory-15kg

HIC Kitchen turkey brining bag, 61 × 60.7 cm, 9 kg rated load

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/hic-kitchen-bolsa-salmuera-pavo-61x60

Inkbird IBT-26S WiFi + Bluetooth thermometer

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/inkbird-ibt-26s-wifi

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/pastrami-casero-ahumado-kamado

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