

Pot roasted Brisket of Beef

This is such an easy dish and only takes about 20 minutes preparation time . It can then be left to look after itself for the rest of the day so is ideal for a late lunch or evening meal on a busy day! If you plan to be out all day just reduce the oven temperature a little and cook for longer. But don't try to skimp on the cooking time -it really is Slow Food at its best.

It is a popular dish with our canal boat customers, and the aroma of Dexter beef floats behind them as they meander along.

This is our own recipe which is easily adapted to different quantities and your own choice of vegetables and flavourings. The wine can be replaced by beer or left out altogether as the stock produced is rich in itself. The star anise gives a subtle kick or can be replaced by a dash of Worcestershire Sauce.

- A 2.5 kilo well-marbled Dexter beef brisket, rolled and tied
- 1 tsp flaked sea salt, plus extra to season
- freshly ground black pepper
- 4-5 tbs English rapeseed oil
- 8 shallot onions
- 2-3 cloves of garlic
- 3 sprigs bushy thyme
- Handful of chopped parsley
- 1 large bay leaf
- 1 star anise
- 2 tbs tomato purée
- 500ml/18fl oz hot beef stock, made with 1 beef stock cube
- 200ml/7fl oz red wine
- 6 large carrots, cut into 3cm/1¼in chunks
- 6 celery sticks, trimmed and cut into 4cm/1½in lengths

Preparation method

1. Season the beef all over with the salt and lots of freshly ground black pepper. Heat two tablespoons of the oil in a large flameproof casserole and brown the beef over a fairly high heat for **8-10 minutes**, turning every couple of minutes. Preheat the oven to 160C/325F/Gas 3.
2. While the beef is browning, chop the vegetables into chunks. Remove the beef from the casserole and put it to one side. Add the vegetables to the casserole and fry for five minutes or until nicely browned. Put the vegetables aside until later
3. Return the beef to the pot and tuck the thyme, bay leaf and star anise around the joint.
4. Stir the tomato purée into the hot beef stock and pour around the beef. Add the wine and bring to a gentle simmer on the hob.
5. Cover with a lid and place in the oven. **Cook for 4 hours** or until the beef is very tender.
6. Add the reserved vegetables around the beef, basting with the juices, cover and **cook for another hour or so** until the beef yields to the pressure of a spoon.
7. Remove the beef from the dish and keep warm. Lift the vegetables with a slotted spoon and keep warm.
8. Strain the stock into a pan, bring to the boil and thicken up if needed by reducing it.
9. Slice the beef into thick slices and serve topped with a spoonful of the vegetables and some gravy. Serve with mashed potatoes and a green vegetable.