

Home Cured Corned Beef:

Gather your ingredients:

- 3lb(ish) beef brisket (grass fed is best!!) I've also used a tri-tip, london broil, and roasts before- they've all been successful, but the brisket is best. This is supposed to feed 4 people, but I've never made just 1 at a time- I usually do 4 or so at a time (that bulk cooking thing- while I'm making a mess, I might as well make a big one!) and usually there's just enough leftover after a big family dinner to have a repeat lunch.
- 1/2 cup sea salt (real sea salt, not iodized salt)

Spice mix

- 1/2 cup pickling spices (you can purchase it premixed but since they usually contains preservatives I like to purchase my spices individually (and in bulk and mix my own combos) usually the pickling spices contain- mustard seeds, peppercorns, whole cloves, coriander, cardamom pods, bay leaves, allspice berries, cinnamon chips/sticks, ginger, red pepper flakes, etc... I have used a variety of combinations including one year throwing in some dried mint leaves, I've never had a bad batch... In my experience the main ones to remember are peppercorns, cloves, bay leaves, cinnamon, allspice and mustard seeds the others are bonuses and don't overdo the cinnamon and cloves. Whole spices are best, but ground will work for some of them if you're stuck.
- 2 cups liquid whey (this is not whey powder, but the clearish liquid from straining yogurt or raw milk or cheese) If you don't have gallons of whey on hand, like I always seem to, you can put a quart of yogurt in a cloth and strainer over a bowl or measuring cup, the liquid that drips out is the whey you want.
- 2 cups celery juice- I just put a bunch of celery through the juicer to get my juice (1 bunch is pretty close to 2 cups of juice). If you don't have a juicer (or in-laws that let you borrow their juicer indefinitely as mine do) you can put the celery in the blender or food processor and chop it really well. Then either strain out the juice or throw the whole mushy thing in your mix. The celery provides natural nitrates to help keep the pink color in your meat and helps the curing process- if you absolutely can't get celery you can theoretically use all whey, but I've never tried it...

There are 2 methods, the first works best and will give you the best flavor, but the second will work too.

1st method:

Rinse your beef and dry it off.

Celery Juice and Whey- I love that color of green!

Mix your salt and pickling spices, rub it into/on the meat, roll the meat and salt/spice mixture up in a cheesecloth (I recommend securing it with a cloth tie or some twine). Put it into a crock or bowl and pour the whey and celery juice over it. Make sure your meat is submerged under the liquid- add some filtered water if needed to make sure it stays under. Many times I have to add a small plate or weight to hold it under. Put a lid on it and set it aside.

You can store it in the fridge if you have 7-10 days to let it cure or I usually leave it out for 3-5 days and then refrigerate if it isn't time to cook it yet... Like sauerkraut and other ferments, the salt preserves it until the beneficials can get going.

Turn your meat regularly (if you remember, daily is good). When you are ready to eat it (after about a week

in the fridge or 3-5 days on the counter (depending on your room temperature) strain off the liquid, remove the cheesecloth and cook it as you normally would. I put it in the crock pot with all the pickling spices still attached and cook with the sliced fresh cabbage.

2nd method:

Mix your salt and pickling spices, put the meat with salt/spices in your crock or bowl, pour your liquid (whey and celery juice) over the top, make sure your meat is submerged- use extra water if needed. Stir a bit daily if you have the chance. After a week in the fridge or 3-5 days on the counter (depending on your ambient temperature- colder rooms will take longer than warm rooms), strain off your liquids and use spices and beef to cook as you normally would.