

Sweet-and-Sour Brisket

1 brisket, 5–6 lb (2.5–3 kg), or 2 smaller pieces of equal weight
 ¼ cup (2 fl oz/60 ml) water
 2 large yellow onions, cut into slices ½ inch (12 mm) thick
 4 large celery stalks, including leaves, cut into slices ½ inch (12 mm) thick
 1 bottle (8 fl oz/250 ml) chili sauce or spicy catsup
 4 large cloves garlic, chopped
 2 bay leaves
 ½ cup (3½ oz/105 g) firmly packed dark brown sugar
 ⅓ cup (2½ oz/75 g) Dijon mustard
 ¼ cup (2 fl oz/60 ml) soy sauce
 ¼ cup (2 fl oz/60 ml) red wine vinegar
 3 tablespoons molasses
 1 bottle (12 fl oz/375 ml) beer
 ½ teaspoon paprika
 4 large baking potatoes, peeled and cut into slices 1 inch (2.5 cm) thick
 salt and freshly ground pepper

This mouth-watering dish can be simmered on top of the stove or cooked in a crockpot. It can be made 3 days in advance and refrigerated, or frozen for up to 6 months (slice it before wrapping for freezing).



In a Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium heat, sear the meat, fat side down, for 5–10 minutes. When it begins to brown, turn and brown the other side, 5–10 minutes longer. Remove the brisket from the pot. Using a large spoon, skim off any fat from the drippings and discard, but leave the drippings in the pot.

Add the water, onions, celery, chili sauce, garlic, bay leaves, brown sugar, mustard, soy sauce, vinegar and molasses to the pot and stir to mix well. Return the brisket to the pot, cover and cook over medium-low heat for 3 hours. Add the beer, paprika and potatoes. Re-cover and continue to cook for 1 hour longer. Add water, if necessary, to keep the mixture moist.

To cook the brisket in a crockpot: Sear the meat on the stove top as directed, then place all the ingredients except the salt and pepper in a large crockpot set on high. Cover and cook until the meat is very tender, 6–8 hours.

Allow the brisket to cool in the liquid for 30 minutes, then transfer it to a container. Pour the cooking liquid and potatoes into a bowl. Discard the bay leaves. Let the liquid and meat cool for at least 2 hours, then skim off the fat from the liquid. Return the liquid and potatoes to a heavy pot with a lid.

Cut the meat across the grain into slices ¼ inch (6 mm) thick and add it to the liquid. Cover and reheat the meat and potatoes over low heat. (Alternatively, reheat in a covered container in a microwave oven.) Season to taste with salt and pepper.

To serve, arrange the slices on a large warmed platter. Surround or top with the cooking liquid and potatoes.

Serves 8