



ROASTS

Laura Mason



Pot Roast Brisket of Beef

Brisket is not an elegant joint, but it has an excellent flavour. This recipe is based on ‘To stew a Rump, or the fat end of a Brisket of Beef in the French Fashion’, recorded by Robert May in The Accomplish’t Cook (1660).

SERVES 6

2kg (4½lb) piece of
rolled brisket
1 tablespoon olive oil
a handful of shallots, peeled
1 garlic clove, peeled
and sliced
1 scant tablespoon plain flour
200ml (7fl oz) red wine
about 150ml (5fl oz) beef
stock (optional)
1 teaspoon salt

FOR THE MARINADE

2 teaspoons black peppercorns
2 blades of mace
6 cloves
fresh root ginger, about 1cm
(½in) cube, peeled and
finely grated
1 generous dessertspoon
demerara sugar
1 garlic clove, peeled
and crushed

To prepare the marinade, put the peppercorns, mace and cloves in a mortar and crush roughly. Stir in the ginger, sugar and garlic, then rub the beef with this mixture. Cover and leave overnight in a cool place or in the refrigerator.

To cook the meat, wipe the beef to remove most of the ground spices. Heat the oil in a casserole and cook the shallots and garlic briskly, stirring frequently, until they begin to brown slightly. Remove to a dish, then put the beef in the casserole and brown it all over. Then put the shallots and garlic around the meat, sprinkle over the flour and add the wine. It should cover the base of the casserole to a depth of about 2cm (¾in).

Fit a doubled sheet of greaseproof paper neatly across the top of the casserole, trimming so that it doesn’t stick out and burn, then put the lid on over this. Cook very gently for 4 hours; this can be done on the lowest possible heat on top of the stove, or in a low oven at 140°C, 275°F, Gas mark 1. Check occasionally, especially if cooking on top of the stove, and add a little stock if necessary, as the gravy tends to reduce and catch; also, sprinkle the salt over the meat.

When cooked, remove the meat to a serving dish. Pour off the gravy and set it aside for a few minutes, then skim off the fat. You should be left with a glossy, deep-brown, rich-tasting sauce, which can be thinned with a little stock or water if you like. Check the seasoning. Slice the meat thinly, and pass round the gravy and some mashed potatoes (see page 200).