

Braised Brisket with Horseradish and Shallots

Serves 8–10

The key components in this recipe are really just the brisket, vinegar, worcestershire sauce and broth (or water). The liquid the brisket creates with just those ingredients is magnificent on its own, but everything else here really does make it so good. Shallots for sweetness, horseradish for gentle earthy spiciness, bay leaves for a “certain something” that yes, I’m sure exists. That said, you can really customize it however you like— adding onions instead of shallots, throw in a few carrots or celery stalks if you like, leaving out the horseradish if that’s not your thing.

If you don’t have a dutch oven, see the bottom of the recipe for a workaround using a baking dish and some tin foil.

4 ½ – 5 lb. brisket
Kosher salt, freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons canola oil
2 heads garlic, halved crosswise, unpeeled is fine
1 pound shallots, halved lengthwise, quartered if large
4 cups beef broth, chicken broth or water (better than bouillon optional)
1 cup white wine vinegar or ¾ cup distilled white vinegar
½ cup worcestershire sauce, soy sauce, or tamari, plus more
¼ cup freshly grated horseradish or 2 tablespoons prepared horseradish, plus more
2 fresh or dried bay leaves or ½ bunch thyme

1. Season brisket with salt and pepper (if you’re measuring, this is at least 1 teaspoon of kosher salt –I use Diamond Crystal– per pound of meat). Do this a few hours (up to 24) in advance, if you’re able (keep it uncovered in the fridge). It’s also fine just to season and go ahead and braise it right away, too.
2. Preheat oven to 275°. Heat canola oil in a large, heavy bottomed dutch oven (at least 5.5qt)* over medium heat. Sear brisket fat side down first. Use tongs or any implement of your choosing to press the meat to encourage as much contact with the pot as possible.
3. Cook, without moving, until the fat-side is deeply browned, 10–12 minutes (doing this over medium heat rather than medium–high will take longer, but with less risk of burning the rendered fat).
4. Using tongs or two large spoons, flip the brisket to brown on the other side, another 10–12 minutes. Be careful here, the fat is extremely hot and can splatter. This is how I burned myself last year, truly a brisket to remember.
5. Transfer the brisket to a large plate or sheet pan and add the garlic and shallots to the pot, cut side down. Season with salt and pepper and cook, without moving, until the shallots and garlic are nicely browned, 3–5 minutes.
6. Return the brisket to the pot and add whatever broth or water you’re using (and Better Than Bouillon, if you’re using that), vinegar, worcestershire sauce, horseradish (if using) and bay leaves. If you wanted to throw in a small handful of black peppercorns, you could do that, too.
7. Bring to a simmer and place the lid on. Transfer to the oven and let it gently braise for 3–3 ½ hours. Remove from the oven and make sure it’s done by inserting the tip of a knife into the thickest part– it should meet no resistance, the whole slab jiggling like jell-o.
8. To serve, transfer the brisket from the pot to a cutting board. Slice against the grain (easy to locate on a brisket, the grain is very apparent) as thick or thin as you like and place on a large serving platter. Give the juices a taste— they should be tangy, salty and very beefy with a bit of heat from the horseradish. Adjust with more worcestershire, vinegar or horseradish as needed. Spoon the jammy shallots and garlic over the brisket along with the juices from the pot over the brisket. Serve with more horseradish on the side, along with some flaky salt and parsley, if you like.

*If you don’t have a dutch oven, you can sear the brisket and shallots in a large skillet and transfer it to a roasting pan or baking dish. Pour the liquid over everything and cover tightly with foil before putting in the oven.