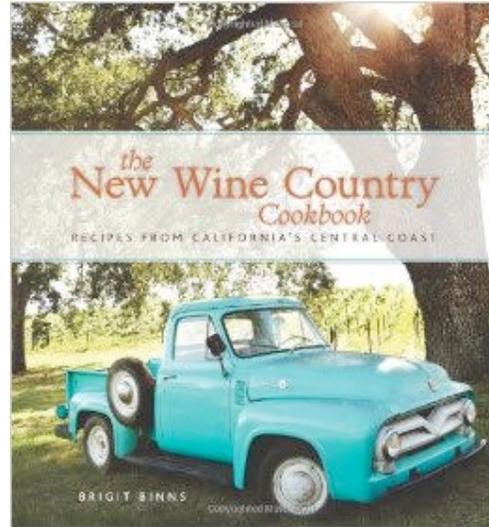


Fork-Tender, Wine-Braised Brisket

Brigit Binns - *The New Wine
Country Cookbook*
Serves 6



A beautifully marbled brisket is the perfect candidate for the mysterious alchemy that results when wine and time are combined with a low temperature in the coddling environment of your home oven. The initial caramelization is the key to great flavor here, so give the searing process your full and undivided attention.

You'll soon be rewarded with a long, lazy afternoon to pursue your activity of choice—whether it's reading or surfing—while the magic wends its way toward an unctuously perfect result. Like all braises, this dish is even tastier a day or two after cooking, when the flavors have had a chance to develop.

Ingredients: *We've noted where to find locally available options*

- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, *Windrose Farm*
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh rosemary, *Windrose Farm*
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh sage, *Windrose Farm*
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped or pushed through a press, *Windrose Farm*
- 3 pounds beef brisket, judiciously trimmed of excess exterior fat, *Templeton Hills Beef*
- 3 slices bacon, cut into 1/4-inch strips crosswise, *J & R Natural Meats*
- 1/3 cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, *The Groves on 41*
- 1 small yellow onion, thinly sliced, *Talley Farms*
- 1 fresh bay leaf or 2 dried

- 2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch dice, *Talley Farms*
- 2 celery ribs, cut into 1/4-inch dice, *Talley Farms*
- 1 (750-ml) bottle Paso Robles Syrah or red Rhône blend
- Cooked rice, polenta, or noodles, for serving (about 1½ pounds)

Directions:

In a small bowl, blend together the chopped herbs and garlic. With a small, sharp knife, cut slits all over the brisket and, using a chopstick, push a strip of bacon into each slit. On a large plate, blend 1/3 cup of the flour with the paprika, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Dredge the brisket in the flour, shaking off the excess.

In a large, heavy casserole, heat the butter and olive oil over medium-low heat. Sauté the onion for 3 to 4 minutes, until softened. Turn the heat up to medium-high and push the onions to one side.

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Add the brisket and scatter the garlic-herb mixture, bay leaves, carrots, and celery around the edges of the pan. Brown the brisket on all sides, stirring and taking care not to scorch the herbs and vegetables. Transfer the meat to a platter and preheat the oven to 300°F.

If there is too much fat in the vegetable-herb mixture, drain off as much as you like and sprinkle the remaining 2 tablespoons of flour over it. Stir together for a minute, then add 1 cup of the wine. Bring to a rapid boil and, stirring occasionally, reduce the liquid by half. Add the remaining wine and salt and pepper to taste. Bring the wine to a simmer and return the brisket to the casserole. Cover the casserole and braise in the oven for 4 or, even better, 5 hours, turning the meat once every 45 minutes. (It may be prepared to this point 1 or even 2 days ahead; cover and refrigerate the meat in the sauce, then rewarm together gently.)

Transfer the meat to a warm platter and, if the sauce is too thin, loosely cover the meat and simmer the sauce briskly for a minute or two, to thicken. Taste for seasoning and adjust with salt and pepper if necessary. Pour the sauce over the meat and serve generous pieces with plenty of sauce, mounded over rice, polenta, or noodles.

Note: If using grass-fed beef, reduce the cooking time by 10 to 15 percent and check occasionally to be sure the meat is not drying out.