



**Meat Injection:
A simple guide
with recipes**

Injecting meat is a very effective way to add a wide range of taste (sweet, salty, sour, etc.) and flavoring (seasonings, herbs, etc.) elements to food, but also a great way to introduce fat into lean cuts of meat.

To get the best results out of your injector, first consider these factors:

- **What type of meat are you cooking?**
- **What cut of meat are you using?**
- **What results are you trying to achieve?**
- **Who are you cooking for?**

Meats vary quite a bit in their natural flavor profiles and the intensity of the taste experience they give. For example, pork and turkey are naturally bland and need flavor and sometimes fat enhancement to meet our expectations. On the other hand, if you are cooking beef or lamb, they are full of flavor-rich compounds that give them a strong character that needs less seasoning.

The cut of meat is also important. A pork loin is bland and dry, while the pork shoulder is full of fat and has more flavor. Ribs are fatty and have a small ratio of meat to bone, so they would require less injection - if any at all.

The size of the cut is essential as well for smaller cuts of meat like chicken parts, steaks, and chops, the seasoning used on the outside of the meat is usually sufficient. This is because each small bite will have some of the surface seasonings. In large cuts such as pork shoulder and turkey breast, you may serve a portion that had no external treatment and will taste bland.

What are your goals?

A basic brine might be enough if you want to simply enhance the flavor of the meat you are cooking. If you are trying to win a BBQ competition, there is much more to consider. If you want your turkey breast or brisket flat to be juicy (maybe for the first time), you must inject some fat. Adding other ingredients will create new flavor profiles. When constructing an injection formula, always consider this: What do you want your meat to taste like?

Who is the audience?

If you are cooking for friends, family, or your community, consider their tastes and any restrictions they might require. Some commercial injection formulas may contain additives that can cause allergic reactions. If you are trying to impress the judges and win a BBQ competition, you can inject almost anything you want. If it's just for you, have some fun and experiment a little.

What's in the marinade?

There are hundreds of recipes and dozens of commercial formulations to choose from. To make an informed choice, it is helpful to have a basic understanding of what to look for. Most injector marinades are simply an enhanced brine (salt and water). Other ingredients, such as sugars, acids, fruit juices, spices, herbs, and flavoring components, can be added. If you are using a commercial formula, read the ingredient list .

Make your own

It's easy. Just remember - what do you want your meat to taste like?

Recipe for a simple brine

A brine is the foundation of most marinades. The proportion of salt can vary depending on how salty you want your meat to taste. The following recipe will enhance the flavor, but not make the meat taste very salty

Ingredients:

¼ cup (1/4 lb. or 44g) Kosher salt
4 cups water

Procedure:

1. Place the salt and 2 cups of water in a saucepan over medium heat.
2. Stir only until the salt is dissolved completely.
3. Remove the pan from the heat, and transfer the solution to another container.
4. Add the remaining 2 cups of water.
5. *Thoroughly cool the brine to room temperature before injecting.*

Other ingredients to consider:

For the (liquid) base:

Meat or poultry broth -

1. Homemade (preferred)
2. Canned/boxed (check any added salt and look over the ingredients)
3. Bullion cubes or soup bases

Vegetable stock

Fruit juices

Added fats:

1. Butter (salted or unsalted)
2. Rendered poultry fat
3. Rendered beef fat (or Wagu fat)
4. Flavored oils

Added flavorings:

1. Herbs - fresh and dried
2. Spices - finely ground
3. Hot sauce