

# BRISKET BRAISED IN POMEGRANATE JUICE WITH ONION CONFIT AND POMEGRANATE SEEDS – FROM THE BERGER-GOULD FAMILY'S TABLE TO YOUR'S

Cut open a pomegranate. Hundreds of juice sacs form a nearly perfect star, red as blood. Little wonder it is celebrated in myth and ritual by all ancient peoples—Chinese, Greeks, as well as Jews—as a symbol of fertility and abundance.

On Rosh Hashanah, Jews often eat the pomegranate, one of the *mipnei ha-aretz* (seven choice fruits of ancient Israel), in fulfillment of the commandment to eat a fruit not yet sampled this season. For, according to kabbalistic tradition, the pomegranate contains exactly 613 seeds, the precise number of commandments a pious Jew must follow; eating this perfect fruit on Rosh Hashanah embodies the hope that we may perform as many good deeds and righteous acts as the pomegranate has seeds.

The pomegranate's virtues are not merely symbolic. Latest scientific research suggests it may slow the aging process and fight diseases like cancer. For the cook, it adds a tart, complex fruitiness to foods, tenderizes tough cuts, and even reduces the amount of salt needed in meat dishes. In this recipe, the juice tenderizes the brisket and invests the amethyst-tinted gravy with a haunting depth. More beautifully layered autumn colors and flavors unfold slowly: a cushion of bronze caramelized onions cooked to a jammy confit or "onion marmalade," giving way to a shower of tart-sweet pomegranate seeds. It's a glamorous showstopper, worth every minute in the kitchen.

## INGREDIENTS

### FOR THE BRISKET:

- 3 tablespoons olive or canola oil
- A first- or second-cut beef brisket, about 5 pounds, trimmed of excess fat, wiped with a damp paper towel, and patted dry
- 2 medium onions, coarsely chopped (about 2 cups)
- 2 leeks, washed well and coarsely chopped (include both white and pale green parts)
- 6 large garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 2 large carrots, scraped and coarsely chopped
- 1 celery stalk with leaves, coarsely chopped
- 2 cups pomegranate juice
- 2 cups chicken broth, preferably homemade, or good-quality, low-sodium purchased
- 3 fresh thyme sprigs or 2 teaspoons dried leaves
- 2 fresh rosemary sprigs
- 2 Turkish bay leaves
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

### FOR THE CONFIT:

- 3 tablespoons olive oil (or 1, if broil searing)
- 4 large onions (about 2½ pounds), very thinly sliced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup chicken broth
- ½ cup dry red wine
- ½ cup pomegranate seeds



# METHOD



**Prepare** the brisket: heat the oil over medium-high heat in a large heavy-bottomed roasting pan, using two burners, if necessary, or in a wide 6-quart Dutch oven or flameproof casserole. Add the brisket, and brown well on both sides, about 10 minutes. Transfer the brisket to a platter and set aside.

**Alternatively**, you might find it easier to sear the meat under the broiler. Just cover the broiler pan well with foil to minimize cleanup. Preheat the broiler. Place the brisket under the broiler, fat side up, and broil for 5 to 6 minutes on each side, or until nicely browned. Move the meat around as necessary, so it sears evenly. Transfer the brisket to a platter and set aside.

**Preheat** the oven to 325°F. Pour off all but about 1 tablespoon of fat remaining in the pan (or heat 1 tablespoon of oil if you broiled the brisket), and add the onions and leeks. Cook, stirring occasionally, over medium-high heat, until the vegetables are softened, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic, carrots, and celery, and continue cooking until the onions are golden, 7 to 10 minutes, stirring and scraping the pan to prevent scorching or sticking.

**Add** 1 cup of the pomegranate juice and bring the mixture to a boil, scraping up the browned bits from the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon, until the liquid is reduced by about half. Add the remaining 1 cup juice, the broth, thyme, rosemary, and bay leaves, and bring the mixture to a simmer. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

**Lightly** salt and pepper the brisket on both sides, and add it to the pan, fat side up, spooning the vegetables all over the meat. Cover the pan tightly (use heavy-duty foil if you don't have a lid for the pan), and braise the brisket in the oven, basting every half hour, until the meat is very tender, 2½ to 3½ hours. (Turn the oven down to 300°F, if the braising liquid begins to bubble rapidly.)

**The** brisket tastes best if it is allowed to rest, reabsorbing the juices lost during braising, and it's easiest to defat the gravy if you prepare the meat ahead and refrigerate it until the fat solidifies. So cool the brisket in the pan sauce, cover well with foil, and refrigerate until the fat congeals. (The gravy can be prepared by skimming the fat in the traditional way, if you prefer. If you go that route, though, do let the meat rest in the pan sauce for at least an hour.)

**About** an hour or so before you are ready to serve the brisket, make the confit: in a 10- to 12-inch heavy skillet, warm the oil. Add the onions, season lightly with salt and pepper, and toss to coat with the oil. Cook, tightly covered, over the lowest heat, stirring occasionally so the mixture does not burn, for 1 hour, or until the onions are very soft and pale gold in color. Add additional salt and pepper to taste, the broth, and wine. Raise the heat and boil the mixture, uncovered, stirring, until all the liquid is evaporated and the onions turn golden. Taste and adjust the seasoning (it may take quite a bit of salt), and turn off the heat. Cover the mixture and keep it warm. Stir in the pomegranate seeds just before serving.

**Scrape** off all solid fat. Remove the brisket from the pan and slice thinly across the grain.

**Prepare** the gravy: bring the braising mixture to room temperature, then strain it, reserving the vegetables. Skim and discard as much fat as possible from the liquid. Puree the reserved vegetables and 1 cup of the defatted braising liquid in a food processor or a blender. Transfer the pureed mixture and the remaining braising liquid to a skillet, and reduce the gravy over high heat to the desired consistency. Taste for seasoning. Rewarm the brisket in the gravy until heated through. Spread the onion confit over a serving platter and arrange the sliced brisket on top. Ladle the hot gravy over the meat and serve immediately.

# BUBBIE SARAH'S CARROT RING RECIPE - FROM THE RUSSO FAMILY'S TABLE TO YOUR'S



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups grated carrots
- 1/2 cup brown sugar (packed)
- Scant cup Crisco
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice & grated rind
- 1 1/4 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda

## METHOD

**Preheat** oven to 350 degrees

**Mix** all ingredients together

**Pour** into a greased ring pan.

**Bake** at 350 degrees for 40 minutes.



# BRISKET – FROM THE SIEGEL FAMILY’S TABLE TO YOURS



## ROSH HASHANAH RECIPE

- 1 ½ Bottles of Beer (lager type)
- 2 Bottles Chili Sauce
- 1 – 1.5 Jars Apricot
- Preserves (small jar)
- ¾ - 1 Cup (two to three handfuls) Dark Brown Sugar .
- Red Wine Vinegar

**Liberally** sprinkle red wine vinegar over brisket (probably ¼ cup or a bit more). Let sit while preparing the other ingredients

**Mix** together beer, chili sauce, apricot preserves and dark brown sugar in large bowl. Pour over brisket making sure the whole brisket is covered.

**Cover** tightly and cook in 325 degree oven about ½ to 45 minutes per pound depending on your oven.

**Remove** brisket and let cool in pan juices. When cool, wrap brisket in foil and pour juices into container.

**Refrigerate** over night and slice (you can do this the same day if needed once the brisket is cooled).

**Once** sliced, put brisket in container with juices. Brisket should be submerged in all of the gravy. This can be reheated covered – I start at 350 and then turn down oven after ½ hour to 170 -200 depending on how long you heat before serving.

## PESACH RECIPE

- 2 Bottles Kosher for Passover Ketchup (Kosher for Passover ketchup has a lot of sugar and vinegar and is great for this recipe)
- 1 ½ small or ¾ large bottle Apricot Preserves (I use Liebers)
- Brown Sugar
- Red Wine Vinegar

**Liberally** sprinkle red wine vinegar over brisket (probably ¼ cup or a bit more). Let sit while preparing the other ingredients.

**Mix** ketchup, apricot preserves and dark brown sugar in large bowl. Pour over brisket making sure the whole brisket is covered.

**Cover** tightly and cook in 325 degree oven about 30 to 45 minutes per pound depending on your oven. This may take a bit longer so you will need to check to see if it’s done.

**Remove** brisket and let cool in pan juices. When cool, wrap brisket in foil and pour juices into container.

**Refrigerate** over night and slice (you can do this the same day if needed once the brisket is cooled).

**Once** sliced, put brisket in container with juices. Brisket should be submerged in all of the gravy. This can be reheated covered – I start at 350 and then turn down oven after ½ hour to 170 -200 depending on how long you heat before serving.

# PLUM KUCHEN- FROM THE SIEGEL FAMILY'S TABLE TO YOURS

IN MEMORY OF BERTHA PERLOW  
IN HONOR OF REBECCA, DEENA AND EMMA



## INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{3}{4}$  pound plus 4 tablespoons butter (or margarine for non-dairy) divided
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cups sifted flour, divided
- Pinch baking powder
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar, divided
- 20-24 blue Italian plums, pitted, quartered (this is also delicious with red plums – a bit more tart. I use around 10-12 and cut in slices)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cinnamon

## METHOD

**Combine**  $\frac{1}{4}$  pound butter (margarine), 1 cup flour, baking powder and 1 tablespoon sugar. Mix well. Spread mixture on bottom and sides of 9-inch tart pan with removable sides.

**Starting** at edge of pan, place plum quarters evenly in overlapping circles, covering entire crust. If using red sliced plums start in the center and make concentric circles going toward edge of pan.

**Using** 2 knives mix together remaining  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup flour, 4 tablespoons butter, and cinnamon. Mixture should resemble small peas. Sprinkle over plums. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven 1 hour 20 minutes.

**To freeze** kuchen, bake 1 hour only. Cool. Freeze. Remove directly from freezer to preheated 350 degree oven. Bake 30 minutes or until filling bubbles.

