

## Coffee-Braised Brisket with Cream and Sugar

Spiced with ground coriander, cumin, chili, and dried oregano, this unusual brisket suggests Mexican roots. Serve it over whole grains, such as wheat berries, wild rice, brown rice, or polenta, or on a bed of egg noodles, with plenty of sauce.

To make the brisket a day ahead, let the beef cool to room temperature in its braising liquid, and refrigerate overnight. Before serving, skim any fat off the surface of the sauce, then proceed with simmering, etc. Slice the beef cold and reheat it in the finished sauce.

TIME: 45 minutes active time

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

One (roughly 3-pound) beef brisket, trimmed of excess fat  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
1 tablespoon canola oil  
1 large onion, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon ground coriander  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
1/2 teaspoon chili powder  
4 cups strong-brewed coffee  
1/3 packed cup brown sugar  
1/4 cup heavy cream  
2 tablespoons cornstarch

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees.

Heat a large, heavy-bottomed pot with a tight fitting lid (such as a Dutch oven) over medium heat. Season the brisket with salt and pepper on both sides. When the pan is hot, add the oil, then sear the brisket for 5 to 7 minutes per side, until very well browned. Transfer the brisket to a plate and set aside.

Add the onion, and cook and stir for 5 minutes, or until the onion is soft, adding a tablespoon or two of water if the onion begins to stick to the pan. Add the garlic and spices, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring, for another minute. Add the coffee and bring to a strong simmer, scraping the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to release any good brown bits from the bottom of the pan. As soon as the mixture simmers, slide the beef back in.

Braise the beef in the oven for one hour. Carefully flip the beef, stir in the brown sugar, and braise another 1 1/2 to 2 hours, or until a skewer inserted into the center of the beef comes out with absolutely no resistance.

Transfer the brisket to a shallow bowl, and cover with foil. Return the pot to the stove and cook the sauce at a strong simmer for 15 minutes, until the liquid has reduced by almost half.

In a small bowl, whisk the cream with the cornstarch and 2 tablespoons cold water until no lumps remain. Add this mixture to the simmering sauce, stirring as the sauce thickens. Season the sauce to taste.

Slice the beef thinly across the grain, and serve with sauce.