

Texas Barbecue Juice

By **Meathead Goldwyn**

Texas barbecue ranges from ribs to goat to sausage, but **beef brisket** is king. A dark clod of beef breast, brisket, when it is cooked, is usually sliced about 1/4" thick across the grain, and served on brown butcher paper or in white bread sandwich.

Old timey Texans take their brisket nekked. They don't don't cotton to sloppy, sticky, ketchup-based sauces like they make up north in Kansas City. That's because cattle don't need sweetened ketchup any more than they need wolves. Some pitstops have relented to public demand and now serve sauces. Some serve gloppy red sauces, but the best serve a thin brown sauce, almost a gravy that works both as a mop during the cook, and as a simple finishing sauce.



These mop-sauces feature local flavors: American chili powder, ancho powder, hot sauce, cumin, beer, onion, beef drippings, and maybe even coffee grounds. Thin as it is, it adds a richness and depth to the meat because it doesn't just sit on the surface, it penetrates. The cooks make up a batch and use it on everything: Brisket, beef ribs, pork ribs, **pulled pork**, sausage (a.k.a. hot links), mutton, goat, and even chicken.

They are used as mops during the cook because in Texas commercial pits often cook the meat two to three feet directly above coals. They can run hot, and they are opened often to add and remove meat. So a mop splashed on the meat during cooking replenishes moisture and cools the meat.

Still, many folks like a sauce, especially if the meat is dry, and that can happen with brisket. So here's a very tasty formula inspired by the sauce at legendary **Cooper's Old Time Pit Bar-B-Que** in Llano, TX, pictured here. They have a dozen pits to cook in, and one pit that is a holding pit. It has hunks of each of their meats and a big bucket of sauce. Customers come up and point at the meat they want and if they want sauce, the meat is dunked in the bucket, flavoring both. Trimmings and leftovers are also tossed in the bucket. So if you go to Cooper's, and if you want sauce, don't tell the pitmaster you'll use the bottled sauce on the picnic tables inside. Tell him to dip it.

Recipe

Makes. About 5 cups. Click [here](#) to calculate how much you need and for tips on **saucing strategies**.

Takes. About 30 minutes.

Keeps. This has beef stock and possibly beef fat in it so it should not be kept for more than a week or two.

Ingredients

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- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 2 teaspoons black pepper
- 2 teaspoons **American chili powder**
- 1 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1 tablespoon of butter *
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 cup Lone Star beer (or any other lager)
- 1/4 cup **ketchup**
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 3 tablespoons **Worcestershire** sauce
- 3 tablespoons **steak sauce**
- 2 tablespoons **brown sugar**
- 2 teaspoons of **hot sauce**
- 2 cups beef, veal, or chicken stock

About the butter. *Butter work fine, but to make it authentic, use rendered beef fat from the a brisket.*

Do this

- 1) Mix the paprika, black pepper, American chili powder, and cumin in a small bowl.
- 2) In a small saucepan, melt the butter or fat and gently cook the onion over medium heat until translucent.
- 3) Add the garlic, bell pepper, and the spice mix. Stir, and cook for two minutes to extract the flavors.
- 4) Add the stock and the rest of the ingredients. Drink the remaining beer. Stir until well blended. Simmer on medium for 15 minutes. Taste and adjust as needed. Divide it in half and use half to mop the meat when cooking. Use the remainder to splash on the meat when you serve it.

