

Corned Beef

Well, now that St. Patty's day is over, you can probably get an awesome deal on corned beef. I managed to pick up a 3lb corned beef for about \$2, and that was yesterday. I'll bet the prices are even lower now. Corned beef is usually brisket but it's sometimes other cuts as well. It's brined in a solution of salt and spices. You want to look for a relatively flat slab – this will indicate that it comes from the brisket. And you do want some fat on the surface, though it's very easy to scrape this off with the side of a knife once you've cooked it.

I cooked mine in a pressure cooker – 6 cups of water, a quartered onion, 4 or 5 smashed garlic cloves, and 4 bay leaves, along with the extra flavor packet that came with the roast, all in the pot. (You could also add some potatoes, too.) I brought it to high pressure, and set the timer for 55 minutes. Then I let it return to normal pressure on its own. The brisket had reduced in size by about half when it was done, and it was pretty fragile. Since my intention was to make sandwiches, I scraped off the excess fat, and put it in a container, and into the fridge so it would firm up and slice more easily.

If you want to make it without a pressure cooker, boil it up in a dutch oven on the stovetop, with the same additions above, and figure 50 minutes per pound. For a traditional New England Boil, add carrots, and small red potatoes about half an hour before its done, and a quartered head of cabbage 15 minutes before its done.

When you slice the meat, make sure you do it across the grain.

A reuben sandwich has you take sliced corned beef on either seeded rye or pumpernickle bread, a bit of sauerkraut, and

swiss cheese ... serve it open faced, if you want, with the cheese melted under the broiler for a bit. Serve with thousand island dressing on the side. (Thousand island dressing is mayonnaise, ketchup, tabasco and finely chopped vegetables, most often pickles, onions, bell peppers, and green olives; chopped hard-boiled egg is also common.)

To make corned beef hash, you want equal parts of corned beef and boiled potatoes, chopped fine along with some onion, and fried up in butter, until a crunchy crust is formed. Serve with a poached egg and ketchup.