Meanwhile, bring the sauce to a simmer on the grill and simmer until thickened, about 30 minutes. Pour the sauce into a shallow bowl.

Brush the chicken on both sides with some of the sauce. Grill the chicken over medium-high heat, turning once and brushing occasionally with more sauce, until nicely grill-marked, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer the chicken to a platter and brush with more sauce. Serves 4.

Williams-Sonoma Kitchen

Braised Brisket

Flavorful brisket is an ideal candidate for backyard braising. Serve the brisket with its sauce the first night and then use the rest of it for making sandwiches.

Preheat a grill to medium-high heat or 350°F.

Season the brisket with the paprika, salt and pepper. Set a large, heavy pot or Dutch oven on the grill and warm the olive oil. Add the brisket and cook, turning as needed, until well browned on all sides, about 10 minutes total. Transfer to a platter.

Reduce the grill temperature to medium heat. Add the onions, celery and carrots to the drippings in the pot and sauté until the vegetables are softened, about 5 minutes. Pour in the broth and stir, scraping up the browned bits from the pan bottom. Stir in the wine, the tomatoes and their juices. Return the meat and any juices from the platter to the pot. Cover the pot and close the grill lid. Braise until the brisket is fork-tender, 3 to 3½ hours.

Transfer the brisket to a carving board, cover loosely with aluminum foil and let rest for 10 minutes. Spoon off and discard the fat from the liquid in the pot. Place the pot on the grill or on the grill's side burner over medium heat and bring the liquid to a boil. Stir in the marjoram and simmer until the liquid is reduced by one-fourth, 7 to 10 minutes. Adjust the seasonings with salt and pepper.

Slice the brisket across the grain and serve with some of the sauce and vegetables spooned on top. Serves 4 (makes about 10 cups sliced or shredded brisket total).

Storage Tip: To store the leftover brisket, place it, uncut or shredded, in an airtight container. Put the sauce in a separate airtight container. Refrigerate the meat and sauce for up to 3 days.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Food Made Fast Series, Weeknight, by Melanie Barnard (Oxmoor House, 2006).

May 16, 2010

	Notes
Ingredients for Braised Brisket	
1 beef brisket, about 5 lb., trimmed of excess fat	
1 Tbs. paprika	
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste	
2 Tbs. olive oil	
2 yellow onions, chopped	
3 celery stalks, chopped	
2 carrots, chopped	
2 cups beef broth	
¾ cup dry red wine	
1 can (14½ oz.) diced tomatoes with juices	
2 Tbs. minced fresh marjoram	

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Technique Class: **Backyard Braising**

Braising is traditionally viewed as a fall and winter cooking technique used to prepare warming stews, pot roasts and classic coq au vin. But this technique can be utilized any time of year and can easily be accomplished on your backyard grill. Braising foods outdoors in the summer allows you to enjoy the good weather, use your grill and avoid heating up your kitchen while enjoying the succulent, slow-cooked flavors that braising produces.

What is Braising?

Simmering food slowly in a moderate amount of liquid is a technique known as braising. Relatively tough cuts of meat, such as chuck roast and brisket, and fibrous vegetables, such as carrots, celery and leeks, are excellent candidates for braising. Braising liquid can be water or a more flavorful liquid, such as broth, stock, wine or beer. Onions, garlic, herbs or other ingredients are often added to the liquid for flavoring. Braising and stewing are closely related, although stews are made with more liquid and smaller pieces of food.

Meat to be braised is generally first browned in fat to give it color and add to its flavor. Browning the meat on a grill produces attractive grill marks and imparts a delicious smoky flavor to the finished dish. The meat is then cooked in a relatively small amount of liquid (usually only 1 to 2 inches deep) in a tightly closed pot or baking dish on top of the stove or in a covered grill over medium-low to medium heat. The lid prevents liquid from evaporating, and the food is quickly surrounded by steam.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Kitchen Companion (Time-Life Books, 2000).

Tips & Tricks for Backyard Braising

Choosing Cuts for Braising: Braised recipes usually call for pieces of poultry, tougher cuts of beef or pork and fibrous vegetables. Many classic barbecue favorites, such as country-style ribs and beef brisket, can be braised to produce moist, flavorful meat.

Choosing Pots: The best pots for braising are heavy ones that distribute heat evenly and retain it well to allow for slow, even cooking. The same is true for braising on the grill; just make sure that your pot is oven safe. A tight-fitting lid is critical to enable the cooking liquid and ingredients to concentrate in flavor. The proper braising pot will produce tender, succulent meat with a flavorful sauce, rather than unevenly cooked meat with a sauce that has reduced too much or tastes burned.

Continued on next page

Browning: Browning meats and vegetables in oil before braising in liquid caramelizes the natural sugars, developing rich surface color and deep flavor. When braising on the grill, you are first browning or grilling the meat, which produces deep flavor and also creates attractive grill marks. Do not skip this step. Resist the temptation to lift pieces up every few seconds, as this interferes with the browning process and can cause the food to lose moisture and stick.

Flambéing Safely: Adding wines and other liquors to braised dishes contributes flavor, but it is important to do this safely. When flambéing, always transfer the liquor from its original bottle to another container before adding the liquid to the pan, as the flame can travel into the bottle and cause it to burst. Remove the pan from the heat when pouring in the liquor, especially if using a gas stove or outdoor grill. Keep pot holders or towels well out of reach of the flames.

Reducing Liquids: An important step in braising is reducing the cooking liquid. This typically involves simmering the liquid briskly for several minutes, reducing its volume, concentrating its flavor and thickening its body. During this process, some of the alcohol content of the wine or spirits will evaporate, eliminating any harsh edge and bringing out the flavor.

A Note About Backyard Braising: In the braising recipes featured here, you will need to adjust the grill temperature during cooking, which is easiest to accomplish on a gas grill.

Glazed Baby Back Ribs

When you serve these delicious ribs, be sure to pass around plenty of paper napkins!

Preheat a grill to medium heat or 350°F. Line a large roasting pan with aluminum foil.

In a saucepan, combine the lemon juice, ketchup, honey, Worcestershire sauce, butter, ginger, coriander and garlic. Set the pan on the grill or on the grill's side burner over medium heat and bring the ketchup mixture to a boil, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon. Remove the glaze from the heat.

Put the ribs in the foil-lined roasting pan. Pour the glaze over the ribs, turning the ribs to coat both sides with the glaze. Arrange the ribs meaty side up. Cover the roasting pan tightly with another layer of foil, set the pan on the grill and close the grill lid. Braise for 1 hour.

Remove the roasting pan from the grill. Using tongs, carefully pull back the foil from the pan. Be careful; the foil and steam will be very hot.

Reduce the grill temperature to medium-low heat. Place the ribs on the grill and close the grill lid. Grill until the ribs are nicely browned and the meat is very tender, brushing occasionally with the glaze from the roasting pan.

Transfer the ribs to a carving board and let rest for 5 to 10 minutes. Cut between the bones to separate the individual ribs. Pile the ribs onto a serving platter and serve immediately. Serves 4 to 6.

Ingredients for Glazed Baby Back Ribs

- 3 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- 1 cup tomato ketchup
- 2 Tbs. honey
- 1½ Tbs. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tbs. unsalted butter
- ¾ tsp. ground ginger
- ¾ tsp. ground coriander
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- 2 lb. (2 racks) baby back ribs

Braised Soy-Ginger Chicken and Bok Choy

Other leafy greens, such as Swiss chard, kale or spinach, may be used in place of the bok choy. Chop the leaves coarsely and cook just until tender. The spinach will need to cook for only a few seconds.

Preheat a grill to high heat.

Set a Dutch oven or deep fry pan on the grill. Combine the water, soy sauce, wine, brown sugar, five-spice powder, ginger and green onions in the pot. Bring to a boil, then reduce the grill temperature to medium heat. Submerge the chicken pieces, skin side up, in the liquid and simmer gently for 8 minutes. Turn the pieces over and continue to simmer until the chicken is opaque throughout when tested with the tip of a knife, about 8 minutes more.

Using tongs or a slotted spoon, transfer the chicken to a platter and cover with aluminum foil. Bring the braising liquid to a boil, add the bok choy and cook until tender, about 3 minutes. Using tongs or a slotted spoon, transfer the bok choy to the platter.

Return the braising liquid to a boil and boil until reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Stir in the honey and sesame oil. Move the pot to the side of the grill. Place the chicken on the grill, brush with the braising liquid and grill for about 2 minutes per side. Arrange the chicken on top of the bok choy on the platter. Pour any remaining braising liquid over the chicken and bok choy and serve with steamed rice. Serves 4.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Food Made Fast Series, Asian, by Farina Wong Kingsley (Oxmoor House, 2007).

Beer-Braised Barbecued Chicken

In our version of barbecued chicken, the chicken is first browned on the grill. Then the meat is slowly braised until tender in a Dutch oven, also on the grill, using a flavorful cooking liquid that combines beer and barbecue sauce. Finally, the chicken is quickly grilled again just before serving to caramelize the sauce. Use only thighs, drumsticks and wings for this recipe; chicken breasts will turn out dry when braised and grilled.

Preheat a grill to medium-high heat.

Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Toss lightly with 3 Tbs of the oil. Arrange the chicken on the grill and brown on all sides, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a platter.

Set a Dutch oven on the grill and heat until the pot is hot. Add the remaining 1 Tbs. oil to the pan along with the onions. Cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the beer and barbecue sauce and bring to a boil. Add the chicken, reduce the grill temperature to low, cover the pot and close the grill lid. Cook until the chicken is tender, about 1 hour. Maintain the liquid in the pan at a slow, steady simmer; depending on your grill, you might need to adjust the heat. Using tongs, transfer the chicken to a baking sheet.

Ingredients for Braised Soy-Ginger Chicken and Bok Choy

- 1½ cups water
- 1 cup soy sauce
- ½ cup rice wine or dry sherry
- 2 Tbs. firmly packed brown sugar
- ½ tsp. Chinese five-spice powder
- 2 Tbs. minced fresh ginger
- 3 green onions, thinly sliced
- 2 lb. bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs or breast halves
- ½ lb. bok choy, quartered lengthwise
- 2 Tbs. honey
- 1 Tbs. Asian sesame oil
- Steamed rice for serving

Ingredients for Beer-Braised Barbecued Chicken

4 lb. chicken thighs, drumsticks and wings

Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

- 4 Tbs. canola oil
- 2 yellow onions, sliced 1/4 inch thick
- 11/4 cups ale or lager-style beer
- 2½ cups barbecue sauce