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COOKING WITH ANDY**Andy McLeish**

Smokin' hot

The chef-patron of award-winning restaurant Chapter One takes the fear out of smoking meats and fish. Words by: Andy McLeish.

SMOKING meats and fish can truly enhance the taste, creating a rich, intense flavour. The smoking process shouldn't be rushed; the famous saying "low and slow" couldn't be closer to the truth. It deepens the flavour and tenderises the meat.

For newbies, smoking can seem intimidating but it's easy to get the hang of it. Traditionally, smoking was used to preserve meat, now with the rise of barbecue restaurants here in the UK it's turned the idea of smoking from being an enigma to becoming much more accessible to the masses.

Hot smoking can be done using wood or charcoal. Gas and electric smokers can also be bought but they won't produce the same flavour you'd expect from either wood or charcoal. To create different flavour profiles there's a vast amount of wood available that each produces a varying flavour when used, so I would advise taking your time, do some research before making your choice, even though there's no harm in experimenting.

Now that it's BBQ season it's a great excuse to fire up



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both the BBQ and the smoker – not to be confused, these are two different cooking techniques. My top tip is to make sure your meat is of the highest quality. Your local butcher should always be your first point of call. Use a salt rub to massage into your meat the day before you barbecue.

For basting, I tie a generous bunch of rosemary, thyme, bay leaves, sage together with a string and use that dipped in olive oil or a marinade of your choice to baste your meat or fish. Remember a good barbecue is a slow and low temperature that is finished by increasing the heat to caramelise the amazing smoky flavour you have produced over the hours of cooking. ♦

RECIPE: Beef brisket**Serves 4****INGREDIENTS**

- 2.5kg Irish beef brisket

SALT BEEF BRINE

- 275g of soft light brown sugar
- 350g of coarse sea salt
- 2 tsp black peppercorns
- 1/2 tbsp of juniper berries
- 4 cloves
- 4 bay leaves
- 55g of saltpetre

To make the brine, place all the ingredients in a large saucepan, pour in 2.5 litres of water and gradually bring to the boil, stirring until the sugar and salt dissolve. Once it has come to the boil, reduce to a simmer and cook for two minutes. Remove from the heat and leave to cool.

Pierce the brisket all over with a skewer. Place it in a large, clean plastic box or bucket and cover the meat with the brine; it must be totally submerged. Leave the meat to brine in the fridge for seven days.

ANCHO CHILLI BEEF RUB

- 90g of ancho chilli powder
- 24g of mustard powder
- 40g of garlic salt
- 26g of onion powder
- 26g of paprika
- 30g of cayenne pepper
- 450g of soft brown sugar
- 180g of kosher salt
- 100g of caster sugar

To make the rub, combine all ingredients in a bowl. Take the beef out of the

brine, rinse well and generously rub the ancho chilli rub into the brisket. Leave to marinate for 30 minutes.

Place the beef in a table-top smoker and smoke for one hour before removing and wrapping it in foil.

Preheat the oven to 100°C/gas mark 1/4. Place the meat parcel on a tray and cook in the oven for seven to eight hours.

Once the meat is soft, remove from the oven and discard the tin foil. Wrap the beef in cling film and allow it to cool in the fridge.

SMOKED MAYONNAISE

- 2 egg yolks
- 1/2 tbsp of Dijon mustard

- 1 tbsp of white wine vinegar
- 250ml of smoked rapeseed oil
- Salt and pepper
- Lemon juice
- Pickled onions
- 1 handful of silverskin onions, peeled
- 300ml of white wine vinegar
- 100g of sugar
- 1 sprig of thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 garlic clove, peeled

To make the mayonnaise, place the egg yolk, mustard and vinegar in a food processor.

Gradually add the smoked oil until it thickens to resemble a mayonnaise.

Season to taste with salt, pepper and lemon juice and place in a clean squeeze bottle.

TO SERVE

- 100g of mini capers
- 100g of cornichons, halved

To prepare the onions, add the vinegar, sugar, thyme, bay leaf and garlic to a pan and bring to the boil.

Add the onions, remove from the heat and allow the liquid and onions to cool and pickle.

Once cool, remove the onions from the liquid, cut in half and scorch the cut-side of the onions in a hot pan. Separate into layers and set aside.

Thinly slice the smoked brisket and arrange on plates. Add some smoked mayonnaise, sprinkle with mini capers, cornichons and the pickled onions and drizzle over a little olive oil. Serve with crusty bread.

NEXT MONTH

Andy cooks roast Irish gras-fed côte de boeuf with smoked celeriac purée and braised oxtail croquant