



Jewish Cooking 101

Never Make These Classic Mistakes When Cooking Brisket

How to make that perfect holiday brisket every time.

By [Shannon Sarna](#) | September 14, 2017

No matter if you use bubbe's holiday brisket every year, or you're trying a new recipe discovered on [Pinterest](#), there are some universal rules you need to keep in mind when cooking brisket. And believe me, if you cook for enough holidays, at some point you may find yourself accidentally making one of these errors. (We have all made these mistakes at some point along the brisket journey.)

Never Buy First Cut

Everyone from bloggers like [Melinda Strauss](#) of Kitchen-Tested to [butchers like Fischer Brothers & Leslie](#) in New York City agree: Second cut is the best cut for

juicy, tender brisket. Since the second cut has more fat, it yields more flavor; first cut tends to be dry, not the adjective you want to use when serving brisket.

Never Rush Cooking

[Sandy Leibowitz](#) of The Kosher Tomato says “Good brisket takes time. Cook it low and slow in a liquid that covers the meat about halfway. A fork should pierce and slide out easily when done properly.” If you try to cook it too quickly, you will be disappointed with a tough piece of meat that no one will want to eat.

Never Cook At High Temperature

Cookbook author and supremely experienced cook [Ronnie Fein](#) says never cook your brisket above 300°F. The ideal temperature is 250°F.

Never Slice It While It's Hot

If you try to slice your brisket while it's hot, the fibers are too soft, and it will be nearly impossible to get even, picture-perfect pieces. Have a little patience and let it cool before you slice it.

Never Cook It the Same Day You Serve It

Requiring even more patience: Cook it 1-2 days before you plan to serve it. Saucy dishes like stew, chicken soup and even tomato sauce are always better the next day as the flavors have a chance to marry and deepen over night.

Never Slice it Along the Grain

After the brisket has properly cooled, and it is removed from its liquid, it's finally time to slice it. And I will admit that this step can be confusing. But as food writer and cookbook author [Leah Koenig](#) shares: Never slice your brisket along the grain. It should always be sliced against the grain. Even a perfectly cooked brisket will be tough if it isn't sliced properly.

Never Make Too Little

This may seem obvious, but you want to make sure you order a big enough brisket depending on your crowd. [Tori Avey recommends](#) half a pound of brisket per person. But you may want to order even a bit more. Food writer [Gabriella Gershenson](#) says, don't just plan enough brisket for dinner — make sure there is extra for leftovers. And I wholeheartedly agree.