



# HOW TO PASTRAMI

*instruction manual · recipe guide*



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# WHAT IS PASTRAMI?

When people refer to pastrami, they are almost always referring to beef that's been cured and smoked with bold spices that form an extremely flavorful crust.

Traditionally, pastrami is made from beef. The most popular cuts include brisket and navel because they have the fat and structure to stay juicy through curing and smoking. But pastrami isn't limited to beef, and it never has been.

Long before pastrami became a deli icon, versions of it showed up across Turkey and Eastern Europe, where cooks preserved and seasoned whatever they had, including goat, mutton and even goose.

That's what I love most about pastrami. It's both classic and flexible.

You can chase the traditional deli vibe, or you can take the technique and make it your own.

The only problem is that curing can feel intimidating. How much salt? How long? What's safe? What if you mess it up? Those questions stop a lot of great cooks before they ever get started.

That's exactly why I created the Girls Can Grill Pastrami Kit.

I want you to get the big flavor and brag-worthy results without the guesswork.

## PASTRAMI INGREDIENTS

After you choose your meat, you'll need two more ingredients: pastrami brine and seasoning. The Girls Can Grill Pastrami Kit includes both.

### PASTRAMI BRINE

The brine contains pickling spice, kosher salt, brown sugar and pink curing salt.

The curing salt (sodium nitrite) is what gives pastrami its pinkish color. Proteins with more myoglobin, like beef, will be brighter pink than pork and poultry, which have less myoglobin.

The meat will soak in the brine for several days. Check the recipe for guidelines.

### PASTRAMI RUB

After the brining process, rinse your meat with cold water to remove excess salt.

Then add seasoning. Girls Can Grill Pastrami Rub is made with traditional spices like mustard seeds, coriander seeds and black pepper.

You don't need a rub with salt because the meat has already absorbed salt for several days.

**WARNING:** Pastrami Brine contains pink curing salt (sodium nitrite). For brining use only. Not for direct consumption. Keep out of reach of children.

# PASTRAMI PROCESS

**MAKE BRINE:** Heat 1 gallon (16 cups) water in a large pot on the stove. Add one pouch of Pastrami Brine. Heat for about 15 minutes to dissolve the salts and sugar. Let cool.

If you don't need 1 gallon of brine to cover your meat, adjust the recipe. Use ½ cup of Pastrami Brine mixture for every 5 ¼ cups of water.

**BRINE:** Place your meat in a meat prep bag. Pour the cooled brine into the bag. Add enough to cover the meat. Press out excess air. Seal the bag tightly. Refrigerate to cure.

**RINSE:** After the appropriate amount of days, remove the meat from the brine. Rinse it in the sink under cold water to remove the pickling spices and excess salt.

**SEASON:** Evenly apply Girls Can Grill Pastrami Rub to all sides. Use 1 to 1 ½ tablespoons of rub per pound of meat. I generally use less on delicate meats like poultry and seafood.

**CURE:** Place the seasoned meat on a wire rack on a sheet pan and refrigerate uncovered for 1 more day. This is the dry brine process and allows those spices to really enhance the meat flavor.

**SMOKE:** The final step for turning cured meat into homemade pastrami is to smoke it.

The good news is that you can follow any basic smoking method for the type of meat you have.

Just cook it to the appropriate internal temperature.

## PASTRAMI BRINE TIMES

Follow the preparation steps on page 3 or in the following recipes. Be sure your meat is fully submerged and refrigerated during the brining process.

<b>LARGE CUTS OF BEEF LIKE BRISKET</b>	5-7 DAYS
<b>LARGE CUTS OF PORK OR POULTRY</b>	3-5 DAYS
<b>SMALLER PIECES OF MEAT OR SEAFOOD</b>	1-2 DAYS

## CORNER BEEF VS. PASTRAMI

The main difference is the cooking process.

Corned beef is meat, usually brisket, that's been cured. Then it's cooked without smoke either in a pot on the stove, in the oven or in a crock pot or instant pot.

Pastrami is meat that has been cured that is cooked on a smoker.

The recipes in this cookbook are all prepared on a grill or smoker.

To cook them in the oven, place the meat on a pan and use the same temperatures.

## COOK TEMPERATURES

Instead of cooking your food based on a timer, cook your meat to the temperatures listed in the below chart. They'll be moist, juicy and tender every time.

*I rely on Thermoworks thermometers. They are the most precise. I use both their leave-in thermometers and an instant read Thermapen ONE.*

<b>BEEF BRISKET, BEEF RIBS</b>	205-210F
<b>BEEF STEAKS, PICANHA, TRI-TIP</b>	130-140F
<b>PORK SHOULDER</b>	200-205F
<b>PORK RIBS</b>	205-210F
<b>PORK TENDERLOIN</b>	145F
<b>POULTRY</b>	165F
<b>SEAFOOD</b>	145F

## HOW TO SERVE PASTRAMI

If you made brisket pastrami, be sure to slice the flat end of the meat against the grain. You can cut thick or thin slices.

Brisket point meat or pork shoulder can be pulled apart and shredded.

If you want super thin slices, chill the meat for about an hour. Then use a meat slicer set to a thin setting to get those shaved pieces like you would find at a deli.

A pastrami sandwich is made on rye bread with slices of pastrami, Russian dressing, Swiss cheese and sauerkraut.

It's also great on its own with a side of cabbage and potatoes.

No matter what meat you use, pastrami can be incorporated into breakfast hash, macaroni and cheese, stir fried rice or even topped on a pizza. Let your pastrami creativity take you to new places!

## STORAGE

Because pastrami has been cured and cooked, the USDA says it can be stored for up to 40 days in the refrigerator in an airtight container.



*make more pastrami*



# BRISKET PASTRAMI

6 lb beef brisket, *trimmed*  
1 Girls Can Grill Pastrami Kit  
1 gallon (16 cups) water

½ cup apple cider vinegar  
2 tbsp beef tallow

**Brine:** Mix the Pastrami Brine with water and let it cool. Place trimmed brisket in a Meat Prep Bag. Cover with prepared brine. Remove the air. Close the bag. Refrigerate 5-7 days.

**Season:** Remove the beef from the brine. Rinse. Season all over with Pastrami Rub. Place on a rack on a baking sheet. Refrigerate uncovered for 1 more day.

**Smoke:** Heat the smoker to 225-275F degrees. Place the brisket on the smoker fat side down over indirect heat. Smoke until it reaches an internal temperature of around 160-170F degrees, around 4 hours. Spritz every 30 minutes with apple cider vinegar.

**Wrap:** Remove the brisket from the grill. Place it on two sheets of butcher paper. Spritz with more vinegar and drizzle on beef tallow. Wrap tightly.

**Finish Cooking:** Return it to the smoker and cook to an internal temp of 205-210F degrees. This should take another 2 hours.

**Rest:** Wrap the brisket with a towel and place it in a cooler without ice to rest for 1 hour.

**Slice:** Remove it from the towel and paper. Slice the flat meat against the grain. Slice or shred the point meat.



# CHUCK ROAST PASTRAMI

2 3-pound chuck roasts

1 Girls Can Grill Pastrami Kit

1 gallon (16 cups) water

**Trim:** Slice each chuck roast in half along the fat seam. Remove any silver skin.

**Brine:** Mix the Pastrami Brine with water and let it cool. Place beef in a Meat Prep Bag. Cover with prepared brine. Remove the air. Close the bag. Refrigerate 5-7 days.

**Season:** Remove the cured beef from the brine. Rinse. Season all over with Pastrami Rub. Place on a rack on a baking sheet. Refrigerate uncovered for 1 more day.

**Smoke:** Heat the smoker to 250F degrees. Place the beef on the smoker over indirect heat. Smoke for 2 hours.

**Steam:** Place a disposable pan of water on the smoker. Continue smoking for about 30-90 minutes, until the internal temperature reaches 205-210F degrees. The smaller pieces will likely be ready in 30 minutes, while the larger ones may take 90.

**Rest:** Let rest 30 minutes. Slice and serve on toasted rye bread.



# PASTRAMI BEEF RIBS

1 rack beef plate ribs

1 Girls Can Grill Pastrami Kit

1 gallon (16 cups) water

½ cup apple cider vinegar

**Trim:** Using a sharp knife, remove any silver skin or thick fatty pieces from the top of the ribs.

**Brine:** Mix the Pastrami Brine with water and let it cool. Place the ribs in a Meat Prep Bag. Cover with prepared brine. Remove the air. Close the bag. Refrigerate 5 days.

**Season:** Remove the cured beef from the brine. Rinse. Season all over with Pastrami Rub. Place on a rack on a baking sheet. Refrigerate uncovered for 1 more day.

**Smoke:** Heat the smoker to 250F degrees. Place the ribs on the smoker over indirect heat. Smoke until the internal temperature reaches 200-205F degrees, around 5-6 hours. Spritz every hour or so with apple cider vinegar.

**Rest:** Remove the ribs from the smoker. Wrap with butcher paper or foil. Rest in a cooler without ice for at least one hour.

**Serve:** Slice between the bones. Then remove the meat from the bones and cut into ¼ inch thick pieces.





# PASTRAMI TRI-TIP

2 lb tri-tip roast  
1 Girls Can Grill Pastrami Kit  
1 gallon (16 cups) water

## BASTING LIQUID

¼ cup vegetable oil  
¼ cup red wine vinegar  
3 cloves garlic, smashed  
pinch kosher salt

**Trim:** Using a sharp knife, trim away any noticeable silver skin.

**Brine:** Mix the Pastrami Brine with water and let it cool. Place the tri-tip in a Meat Prep Bag. Cover with prepared brine. Remove the air. Close the bag. Refrigerate 6 days.

**Season:** Remove the cured beef from the brine. Rinse. Season all over with Pastrami Rub. Place on a rack on a baking sheet. Refrigerate uncovered for 1 more day.

**Grill:** Heat your grill to 350-375F degrees.

**Make Basting Liquid:** In a small pot, combine the basting ingredients. Set it on the grill to heat the oil.

**Grill:** Place the seasoned tri-tip on the grill over direct heat. Cook, flipping every 5-7 minutes. Baste with the liquid after each flip. Cook to 135F degrees. This will take 35-40 minutes.

**Rest:** Remove the tri-tip from the grill. Let rest for 10-15 minutes. Then slice against the grain.



# PORK BELLY PASTRAMI

2-3 lbs pork belly, *cubed*

1 Girls Can Grill Pastrami Kit

1 gallon (16 cups) water

**Brine:** Mix the Pastrami Brine with water and let it cool. Place the pork cubes in a Meat Prep Bag. Cover with prepared brine. Remove the air. Close the bag. Refrigerate 5 days.

**Season:** Remove the cured pork from the brine. Rinse. Season all over with Pastrami Rub. Place on a rack on a baking sheet. Refrigerate uncovered for 1 more day.

**Smoke:** Heat the smoker to 250-275F degrees. Place the rack of pork on the smoker over indirect heat. Smoke until the internal temperature reaches 200F degrees. The cook time will vary, depending on the size of your cubes.



# PASTRAMI PULLED PORK

10 lb pork shoulder

1 Girls Can Grill Pastrami Kit

1 gallon (16 cups) water

¼ cup brown sugar

¼ cup butter

1-2 tbsp honey

**Brine:** Mix the Pastrami Brine with water and let it cool. Place the pork in a Meat Prep Bag. Cover with prepared brine. Remove the air. Close the bag. Refrigerate 5 days.

**Season:** Remove the cured pork from the brine. Rinse. Season all over with Pastrami Rub. Place on a rack on a baking sheet. Refrigerate uncovered for 1 more day.

**Smoke:** Heat the smoker to 275F degrees. Place the pork on the smoker, fat side up, over indirect heat. Smoke until the internal temperature reaches 150-160F degrees, around 4 hours.

**Wrap:** Place the pork butt, fat side up, on top of two sheets of foil. Top with the brown sugar, butter, honey and another sprinkle of Pastrami Rub. Wrap tightly.

**Finish Cooking:** Place the wrapped pork butt back on the smoker and continue cooking to an internal temperature of 195-205F. This will take another 3-4 hours.

**Rest:** Remove the pork butt from the smoker and rest for at least 30 minutes.

**Shred:** Place the meat in a large bowl, pan or pot. Remove the bone and shred the meat. Toss with some of the juices from the foil.



# PASTRAMI WINGS

2 lb chicken wings

1 Girls Can Grill Pastrami Kit

1 gallon (16 cups) water

**Brine:** Mix the Pastrami Brine with water and let it cool. Place the wings in a Meat Prep Bag. Cover with prepared brine. Remove the air. Close the bag. Refrigerate 2 days.

**Season:** Remove the cured wings from the brine. Rinse. Season all over with Pastrami Rub. Place on a rack on a baking sheet. Refrigerate uncovered for a few hours or overnight.

**Smoke:** Heat the smoker to 350F degrees. Place the wings on the smoker over indirect heat. Smoke until the internal temperature reaches 195-205F degrees, around 30-60 minutes.



# TURKEY PASTRAMI

1 fresh turkey breast, *boneless and skinless, 1-2 lb*

½ cup Girls Can Grill Pastrami Brine

5 ¼ cups water

2 tbsp Girls Can Grill Pastrami Rub

1 stick butter, *cubed*

**Brine:** Mix the Pastrami Brine with water and let it cool. Place the turkey in a Meat Prep Bag. Cover with prepared brine. Remove the air. Close the bag. Refrigerate 3 days.

**Season:** Remove the cured turkey from the brine. Rinse. Pat dry. Season all over with Pastrami Rub. Refrigerate uncovered for a few hours or overnight.

**Smoke:** Heat the smoker to 275F degrees. Place the turkey breast on the smoker, breast side up, over indirect heat. Smoke until the internal temperature of the breast reaches 140-145F degrees, around 1 hour.

**Wrap:** Place half of the butter cubes on a sheet of foil. Add the turkey on top, breast side down. Add the remaining butter on top. Wrap tightly.

**Finish Cooking:** Place the wrapped turkey back on the smoker and continue cooking to an internal temperature of 155-160F, about 30-45 minutes.

**Rest:** Remove from the smoker and let rest for 30 minutes.

**Carve:** Slice and serve.



# DUCK PASTRAMI

**2-4 duck breasts**

**½ cup Girls Can Grill Pastrami Brine**

**5 ¼ cups water**

**2 tbsp Girls Can Grill Pastrami Rub**

**Trim:** Score diamonds into the fat on the top of each breast.

**Brine:** Mix the Pastrami Brine with water and let it cool. Place the duck in a Meat Prep Bag. Cover with prepared brine. Remove the air. Close the bag. Refrigerate 2-3 days.

**Season:** Remove the cured duck from the brine. Rinse. Pat dry. Season all over with Pastrami Rub. Place on a rack on a baking sheet. Refrigerate uncovered for a few hours or overnight.

**Smoke:** Heat the smoker to 225F degrees. Place the duck on the smoker, fat side up, over indirect heat. Smoke until the internal temperature of the breast reaches 125F degrees, about 30-45 minutes.

**Reset Grill:** Adjust your grill to set up a high, direct heat zone or heat a cast iron skillet to 500F degrees.

**Sear:** Place the smoked duck breast over the direct heat or into the hot pan, fat side down. Cook to crisp up the fat and to an internal temperature of 135F.

**Rest:** Remove from the smoker and let rest for 5-10 minutes before serving.



# SALMON PASTRAMI

2 whole salmon filets, 2-3 lb

2 tbsp Girls Can Grill Pastrami Rub

½ cup Girls Can Grill Pastrami Brine

5 ¼ cups water

**Brine:** Mix the Pastrami Brine with water and let it cool. Place the salmon in a Meat Prep Bag. Cover with prepared brine. Remove the air. Close the bag. Refrigerate 2 days.

**Season:** Remove the cured salmon from the brine. Gently rinse. Brush oil on a baking rack set over a baking sheet. Place the salmon on the rack, skin side down. Season the top side with Pastrami Rub. Refrigerate uncovered for a few hours or overnight.

**Smoke:** Heat the smoker to 225F degrees. Place the rack of salmon on the smoker over indirect heat. Smoke until the internal temperature reaches 140F degrees, around 50-60 minutes.

**Rest:** Remove from the smoker, and let rest 5-10 minutes before serving.

**Appetizer Option:** Shred the meat and serve on crackers with cream cheese, green onions and capers.

# MEET THE PITMASTER



Christie Vanover is the owner of Girls Can Grill® and an award-winning competitive pitmaster. She has won several grand championships and has been named the Nevada BBQ Team of the Year several times over the years.

Christie competed in Season 4 of Food Network's BBQ Brawl and is the host of the BBQ Tips Podcast.

Her signature spice line has helped her win numerous awards, including 5th place in brisket at the Jack Daniel's World Championships in 2022.

She established GirlsCanGrill.com in 2015 to share grilling tips and recipes to encourage more people to get outside and grill. The site currently has nearly 2 million annual readers, thousands of pro tips, hundreds of grilling recipes and over 7,500 reviews.

*Connect with Christie*

Websites: [girlscangrill.com](http://girlscangrill.com), [zestuous.com](http://zestuous.com)

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