

## Drunken Beef

1 (3½ to 4-pound) beef brisket, trimmed of excess fat  
Pinch of salt  
Pinch of freshly milled ground black pepper  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 pounds onions, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced lengthwise (6 cups)  
1 bay leaf  
1 bottle light colored beer/ or red wine  
1 tablespoon gravy powder or beef bullion  
1 tablespoon Balsamic vinegar  
2 sprigs of fresh thyme

Place a rack in middle of oven and preheat oven to 350 F.

Pat brisket dry with kitchen towel and sprinkle with plenty of salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a 6-8 quart wide heavy ovenproof pot, over moderately high heat until hot, but not quite smoking. Brown meat well on all sides, about 10 minutes (this not only adds great color but also adds a great taste)

Transfer brisket to a platter.

**Kitchen Note:** Notice after several minutes how blood will start to come out of the brisket, this proves that searing doesn't actually seal in the flavor; rather it adds great taste and color.

Add onions and bay leaf to fat remaining in pot and cook over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until onions are golden, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from heat and transfer half of onions to a bowl. Place brisket over onions in pot and then top with remaining onions. Add beer, bouillon cube, fresh thyme and vinegar (liquid should come about halfway up sides of meat; add water if necessary) and bring to boil.

Cover pot, transfer to oven and braise until meat is very tender, 3 to 3½ hours. Let meat cool in sauce, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Transfer brisket to cutting board. Skim off any fat from sauce, discard bay leaf and season sauce with salt and pepper. Slice meat (across the grain) and serve with sauce.

*Jon Ashton!*  
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