

Slow Cooker Sweet and Savory Pulled Beef Sandwiches with Au Jus ~ Antigoni Sander

Ingredients

4 Pound Chuck Roast, Cut into 4 equal pieces

3 tsp. Salt + More for seasonings

3 tsp. Black Pepper + more for seasoning

¼ Cup Olive Oil

2 Large Yellow Onions, sliced into half-moons

4 oz. Tomato Paste

½ tsp. Cayenne Pepper

1 tsp. Ground Cumin

½ Cup Red Wine 1 – 15oz. Can Crushed Tomatoes

1 Cup Chicken Stock

3 Tbsp. Honey

1 Beef Bouillon Cube, Crushed

2 Teaspoons Worcestershire Sauce

3 Whole Smashed Garlic Cloves

3 Bay Leaves 2 Cinnamon Sticks

10 All Spice Berries

4 Cloves

Long Strips of Orange Peel from one Large Orange

4 Tbsp. Red Wine Vinegar, separated

1 Container Crispy Onions, like French's Fried Onion

Salt and Pepper to taste

Assortment of Buns, I like the small King's Hawaiian Buns

Cheesecloth and kitchen twine

Directions

1. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Generously coat the beef on all sides with salt and pepper. Once the oil is glistening, add the meat to the skillet and brown each side for 2 to 3 minutes. You are looking for a nice dark sear on all sides.
2. While you are searing the beef, prepare the ingredients for your flavor base. Measure and set up everything starting with the sliced onions all the way down to the Worcestershire Sauce, lining them up on your counter so they are ready to go.
3. Once the beef is seared, place the pieces on a baking sheet with a rim so any juices that release are contained. Set the beef aside. Turn the skillet down to medium, add a splash more olive oil if it is looking dry, and then add the sliced onions to the pan. Sprinkle the onions with salt and pepper and sauté for about 5 minutes. Next add the tomato paste, cumin and cayenne to the skillet and stir them into the onions, sautéing together for 30 seconds. Next add the red wine to the skillet and turn the heat up to medium high. The contents will bubble; continue to stir and scrape up any flavor bits that have stuck to the bottom of the pan. Allow the wine to reduce by half – about 2 minutes – and then add the crushed tomatoes, chicken stock, honey, bouillon cube, Worcestershire and 3 tsp. salt and 3 tsp. black pepper. Bring the contents up to a boil and allow the sauce to simmer for about two minutes. Then remove the skillet from the heat.
4. Next prepare your bouquet garnis (see note below) by placing the garlic, bay leaves, cinnamon stick, allspice berries and cloves into a piece of cheesecloth and tying together with a piece of kitchen twine. If you don't have cheesecloth a coffee filter works great. Also, prepare the orange peel strips.
5. It is now time to put it all in the slow cooker! Pour half of the tomato and onion mixture into the slow cooker insert. Next place the seared beef on top of the sauce and pour in any collected juices from the baking sheet. Scatter the orange peel slices over the beef and place the bouquet garnis in between the beef pieces. Finally pour the remaining tomato and onion mixture over the beef. Place the cover on the slow cooker and set to the Low for 8 hours.
6. After 8 hours, remove the beef from the slow cooker and place onto a rimmed baking sheet where it can cool for a few minutes. Discard the bouquet garnis and the orange peel slices from the insert and begin to prepare the au jus sauce. Place a strainer over a medium sized pot and pour the contents of the slow cooker into the strainer, collecting the onions in the strainer and pushing the liquid into the pot. Return the onions to the slow cooker and pour 1 cup of the strained liquid back into the slow cooker. To the liquid that has remained in the pot add, 1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar and 1 cup water. Bring the contents to a boil on the stove and then turn down to low to keep warm, this is your au jus. Next, shred the beef, discarding any thick pieces of fat. Add the shredded beef back into the slow cooker and stir in remaining 3 tbsp. of red wine vinegar to the beef and onion mixture. Stir the contents of the slow cooker together, cover the slow cooker and return the temperature to low, heating the contents up for about 30 minutes. This is to merely get the meat nice and hot. Once hot, taste it to see if any salt and

pepper needs to be added. Adjust the temperature of the slow cooker to warm/low to keep the meat warm.

Building Your Sandwiches – Set Up An Assembly Line

When you are ready to serve, make an assembly line. Start with a basket full of buns, followed by the slow cooker with the beef, then a gravy boat or small slow cooker with the au jus and a bowl full of crispy onions! Let your friends make their own sandwiches, but be sure to encourage them to douse them in the delicious au jus, it makes a messy but DELICIOUS sandwich!

NOTE

Bouquet Garnis: Is a flavor bundle, often contained in cheesecloth, used to infuse flavor into dishes. If you don't have cheese cloth use a coffee filter!

MAKE AHEAD

The beef can be prepared a couple of days ahead of time and reheated in the oven. Simply add about ½ a cup of water to the pulled beef, put in a baking dish, cover with tin foil and heat for about 30 minutes in a 350°F oven. Once hot you can add the meat into a slow cooker set to warm for serving. Also, for a major make ahead the shredded beef freezes beautifully!