Recipes for Brisket and Babka, OKC

Ratatouille Brisket

Serves 8

4 to 5 pounds second cut brisket, rinsed and dried very well with paper towels

3 tablespoons potato starch

5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided

2 onions, halved and chopped into ¼ -inch slices

1 large eggplant, about 1 pound, cut into ½-inch pieces

½ pound zucchini, cut into ½-inch pieces

3 cloves garlic, roughly chopped

¼ cup tomato paste

1 cup crushed tomatoes  
2 cups water, or more as needed

1 teaspoon dried thyme

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon black pepper

8 basil leaves, finely chopped

¼ cup Italian flat parsley leaves, chopped

2 cloves garlic, crushed

Preheat oven to 375°F.  Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large pan with sides over medium-high heat. Sprinkle potato starch on both sides of the meat, shaking off excess, and brown in pan in batches if necessary, until you see crispy parts on the meat, about 2 to 3 minutes per side.  Remove to a roasting pan.

Reduce heat to medium. Add another 2 tablespoons oil and the onions to the pan and cook for 3 minutes, until they start to brown, scraping any browned bits on the bottom of the pan. Add another tablespoon of oil and add the eggplant and zucchini, and cook over medium heat, stirring often, for 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for one minute, stirring often.

Add the tomato paste and press into the pan and stir to distribute. Add the thyme, salt and pepper and stir. Cook for 1 minute. Scoop up half of the vegetables and place into a bowl. Set aside until cooled and then refrigerate. Add the crushed tomatoes and water to the pan and bring to a boil.

Pour the vegetables and sauce on top of the meat. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake in the oven for 1 1/2 hours.

While the meat is cooking, place the basil, parsley and garlic into a small bowl. Cover and refrigerate.

When the brisket is cooked, remove pan from oven, place meat on a cutting board and slice against the grain into thin slices.  Return the slices to the pot. Take the reserved ratatouille and spread on top of the slices. If the pan seems dry, add ½ cup boiling water and mix in. Add more pepper if desired. Cover and return to the oven. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F.

Bake for another 45 minutes to an hour, until the meat is tender when a fork is inserted. Remove from oven and sprinkle the basil, parsley and garlic mixture on top, pressing the garlic into the tomato sauce.

Honey Cake Babka

Makes 2 8-inch loaves

Dough

1/4 cup prepared espresso or strong coffee

2 packets yeast, ½ ounce, 2 ½ teaspoons

1 teaspoon sugar

1/3 cup water

3 cups plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour, plus extra for sprinkling

1/3 cup light brown sugar

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground ginger

½ teaspoon ground cloves

¼ teaspoon nutmeg

¼ teaspoon salt

¼ cup oil

¼ cup coconut oil, butter or margarine

¼ cup honey

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

3 large eggs, divided (one is for glazing)

spray oil

Filling

½ cup light brown sugar

1 tablespoon cinnamon

¼ teaspoon ground ginger

¼ teaspoon ground cloves

¼ teaspoon salt

½ cup apricot jam

Streusel

1/2 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 cup light brown sugar

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon salt

4 tablespoons coconut oil, butter, or margarine, at room temperature

Prepare the espresso or coffee and place into the fridge to cool. In a measuring cup, place the water, yeast, and sugar. Mix and let sit for 10 minutes, or until thick.

Meanwhile, in the large bowl of a stand mixer or other large bowl, place the flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, nutmeg, salt, oils, honey, coffee, vanilla and 2 of the eggs. When the yeast mixture has thickened, add to the bowl. Use a dough hook in a stand mixer on low speed or wooden spoon to mix until all the ingredients are mixed together and the dough comes away from the sides of the bowl. Knead either with the hook on on the counter for another two minutes.

Cover bowl with plastic wrap and let rise 1 to 1 ½ hours, or until the dough is spongy. Prepare your filling while the dough is rising.

In a small bowl, combine the brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and salt.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease two 8-inch loaf pans.

Divide the dough into two. Place a piece of parchment paper about 17 inches long on your counter and sprinkle with about 2 teaspoons of flour. Place one dough half on top and sprinkle with another ¼ teaspoon flour. Roll the dough into a 12 X 16-inch rectangle so that the 16-inch side is facing you. Sprinkle a little flour on the rolling pin if the dough sticks to it. Spread half of the apricot jam all the way to the edges and sprinkle half of the sugar and spice mix on top.

Roll up the long way. Roll the parchment paper over the roll and roll up. Place into the freezer for 5 minutes while you roll the second piece of dough as you did the first and then place that roll in the freezer for 5 minutes.

Remove the first roll from the freezer and unwrap onto the parchment paper with the seam of the roll on the bottom. Use a large knife to slice the roll in half the long way. Turn each half so that the cut sides face up. Lay one over the other to form an “ X.” Twist the two strands around each other, keeping the cut side facing up. Tuck the ends under the loaf so that they slightly overlap each other in the center. Place into the prepared pan and press down slightly. Repeat for the second roll.

Beat the remaining egg in a small bowl and brush the tops of the babkas.

In a small bowl, combine the flour, brown sugar, cinnamon and salt.

Add the coconut oil, butter, or margarine and mix with your fingers until combined. Divide between the two loaves and sprinkle on top of the babkas.

Bake for 35 minutes, or until golden.