



## Watch portions with corned beef

### How do they make corned beef? Why is it called “corned”?

Ah. Corned beef and cabbage — it must be close to St. Patrick’s Day. Or perhaps you simply have a year-round affinity for Reuben sandwiches. Or, maybe you’re a fan of corned beef hash. In any case, you probably already know that “corned” has nothing to do with corn.

“Corned” refers to something preserved with salt or brine, and that’s exactly how they make corned beef.

Originally, corned beef was made by rubbing particles of salt into beef as a method of preservation. Since one of the definitions of “corn” is a small, hard pellet of salt, it’s clear where the name for this type of beef came from.

Today, brine (or salt water) is used to make corned beef. Often, peppercorns and bay leaves are used to season the brine, helping give corned beef its distinctive flavor. Corned beef is usually made from less-tender cuts of beef — most often the brisket, but sometimes the round or rump.

Even though salt is a good preservative, it’s important to properly handle corned beef just as you would any other perishable product. Usually, uncooked corned beef is sold in a pouch with pickling juices. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service, uncooked corned beef should be fine stored in the refrigerator for five to seven days, unless the label has a “use-by” date on it. In that case, the meat should be good to use until that

date, unless the package is opened. Once the package is opened, cook the meat right away or wrap it up again and freeze it for later.

To freeze uncooked corned beef, it’s best to drain any brine beforehand, because it could increase the chance the meat would go rancid or at least change the texture of the meat. Neither condition means the meat is unsafe, but its quality would be affected.

When you sit down to eat, watch your portions. A 3-ounce serving of corned beef brisket has 213 calories and 16 grams of fat (5 grams saturated fat), as well as a whopping 964 milligrams of sodium. That’s compared with 54 milligrams of sodium in regular beef brisket. For more nutrition information on corned beef and all types of food, see the USDA’s National Nutrient Database at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/search/>.

If you have leftovers, be sure to cool them within two hours of cooking or reheating, as you would any perishable food. Corned beef will be good if refrigerated for three to four days, or you can freeze it for two to three months.

For cooking tips and more food safety hints on corned beef, see the FSIS Web site at [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Corned\\_Beef](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Corned_Beef).

*Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or [filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu).*



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#### Editor:

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