JUNETEENTH
RECIPES from the SWEET HOME CAFÉ

BARBECUED
BEEF BRISKET SANDWICH

IN MUCH OF THE SOUTH, barbecue is about pork. In Texas, however, beef brisket is the chosen meat on the barbecue trail. The tender, smoky beef pairs well with charred peach chutney in the Café’s version of a barbecued beef brisket sandwich.

1 (5-pound) beef brisket, trimmed of excess fat (leave ¼-inch fat cap on the meat)
1 cup Barbecue Dry Rub (page 196)
1 tablespoon coarse sea salt
3 tablespoons cracked black peppercorns
10 pounds hickory wood chunks

4 pounds natural wood charcoal
6 to 8 artisanal sandwich buns, for serving
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
Charred Peach & Jalapeño Chutney (page 136), for serving

THE NIGHT BEFORE
Generously season the brisket on all sides with the Barbecue Dry Rub, sea salt, and peppercorns. Rub them thoroughly into the meat, fat, and pockets to ensure even distribution. Place the brisket on a wire rack set on top of a baking sheet. Place uncovered in the refrigerator for 12 hours to marinate.

Cover the hickory chunks with water and leave to soak overnight.

THE NEXT DAY
Remove the brisket from the refrigerator and let it to come to room temperature.

Drain the hickory chunks.

To set up your smoker, first ignite the charcoal. Use an electric or chimney-style starter to avoid the chemical flavors associated with lighter fluid. Once the coals are fully burning and have turned white, move them to one side of the smoker. Place 4 to 5 pounds (reserve the rest to replenish as needed) of the hickory chunks on top of the coals in order to start the burning.

Set the smoker’s grill rack in place and put the brisket on it, positioning it on side that is not above the coals. The goal of setting it up like this is to create a cooking environment in which the meat is not in direct contact with the burning wood and has heat and smoke circulating around it.

Close the lid on the smoker and adjust the air supply on the bottom and vent on the top to maintain a steady smoking temperature of 230°F. Check the cooking temperature every 30 minutes throughout the process. If the temperature drops below 230°F, you may need to add more hickory or increase the air supply. If the temperature exceeds the desired cooking temperature, reduce the air supply.

After 3 hours of smoking, remove the brisket from the smoker and wrap the entire piece of meat tightly in two or three layers of aluminum foil. Then return the meat to the smoker and continue cooking. Smoke the meat until it reaches an internal temperature of 200°F on an instant-read thermometer, 5 to 6 hours longer, then allow the meat to rest for 45 minutes before slicing.

Thinly slice the brisket across the grain, generously portion the meat onto the buns, season with salt and pepper, and top with Charred Peach & Jalapeño Chutney.