

## Five Dishes That Showcase the Versatility of Brine

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MARCH 7, 2025



PHOTO: ALEXA BENDEK

### Pastrami Rib Chop

*Morgan's Brooklyn Barbecue, Brooklyn*

The dish that's become Chef **Cenobio Canalizo**'s calling card began with an experiment. He'd gotten his hands on some hefty beef ribs, and his mind went to pastrami. "I like to do normal pastrami, with brisket," he says. "But I thought, what if I tried it with this?" His early attempts, brined in a conventional mix of water, salt, and pickling spice, fell flat: "The flavor was like eating spices and a piece of meat. That's it. And the texture was just OK." Then the steakhouse veteran remembered his appreciation for the interplay of beef's savoriness with sweet ingredients like apricots and port wine. He retooled his brine, giving the ribs an eight-day soak in a mixture of water, pink and Diamond kosher salts, pickling spice, mustard seeds, cloves, all-spice, coriander, and apple cider vinegar, along with brown sugar and honey.

The final ingredient proved transformative, imparting a self-glazing effect so that after eight hours spent smoking over white oak, the ribs were not only flavorsome and meltingly tender; they were also shellacked with a caramelized crust. "The owner was like, 'What did you do? Did you brûlée it?'" Canalizo says. "And I said, 'No. It's just the honey.'"