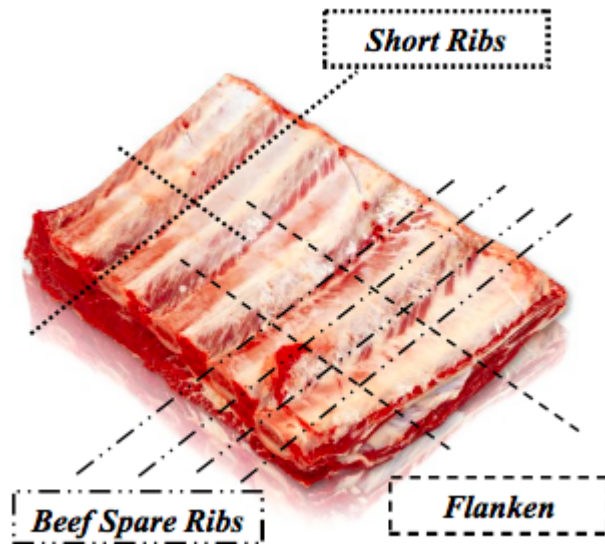


# BOB'S SWEET AND SOUR FLANKEN

OK, the first question is going to be "What is Flanken?" Flanken is a Jewish cut of meat that speaks of what we call today short ribs. The difference being, that what is sold as short ribs have a beef rib bone of about 8 to 10 or so inches long with several joined together with meat around and between the bones. Flanken is the same cut but the bones have been cut to be maybe 1 ½ inches in length with the meat around and between the bones.



So get to know your butcher. If you cook much, you should already know your butcher! Ask him to cut for you some short ribs into flanken for this recipe. 2 pounds should serve 4 to 6 people.

This recipe can be made the day of serving or for a better way, make it the day before and refrigerate it. When it's been chilled, it is easier to remove the extra fat that floats to the surface and the flavors will also intensify the second day. You can easily double or triple the recipe. It is pretty forgiving.

The natural sauce this makes is a bit of heaven, so be sure to have little bowls available for the sauce when you serve it. Include some good sour dough or baguette breads for dunking into the bowl of sauce. The tomatoes, onion and meat juices in this sauce add a rich umami taste sensation and is worth savoring with a crunchy bread. (It used to be that the 'scientists' said our taste buds could taste: Salt, sweet, sour, and bitter; however, they have now added

a 5<sup>th</sup> taste bud sensation called savoriness or umami as it is called by the Japanese. If you don't believe me, look it up! {and don't add the bread to your meal}}

## Ingredients:

2 pounds flanken (Not purely lean, but not too fatty. Cut off any of the outside fat that seems too much.) You can use breast or plate flanken. The breast is longer and meatier, but the plate is what you will probably find at your butcher these days.

A couple of tablespoons of fat to brown the flanken. Home-made tallow or lard (see my other recipes) would be good but peanut, corn, or canola oil will also work.

1 cup water

1 pint home-made basic fresh tomato sauce and ¼ to ½ pint home-made tomato paste (see my other recipes)

**OR**

½ pint home-made basic fresh tomato sauce plus ½ pint home-made tomato sauce of green tomatoes plus ¼ to ½ pint home made tomato paste

**OR**

1 (15 ounce) can Hunt's tomato sauce

1 large yellow onion – diced

2 tablespoons sugar with ½ tsp molasses (or 2 tablespoons brown sugar)

¼ teaspoon citric acid or juice of ½ good sized lemon

Salt & pepper

You will also need a fry pan and a heavy casserole with lid. If you plan to serve the next day, the casserole will need to be one safe for stove top use too – like a heavy enameled cast-iron one. If you are a cast-iron user and have a cast-iron bean pot or dutch-oven, be careful with this recipe. You might find that the extra acidity of this dish could remove the seasoning of your cast-iron pot and you will need to re-season the pot when you are done. (I have this by experience.)

## Process:

Trim excessive outside fat from the meat then cut the flanken into two bone pieces; for those sections that may be a little skinny make them 3 bones; for those sections overly large, make them 1 bone pieces. Place the prepared meat on a platter and salt them well on both sides and add a bit of fresh ground pepper too.

Add the fat to the fry pan on medium-high heat – heating the oil to hot but not smoking. Brown the meat a few pieces at a time returning them to the platter. If a hot (burned) section appears in the pan, place the next piece there so that there are no burned spots, just dark. When complete, set the platter aside for now.

Drain all the oil out of the fry pan then add ½ cup of the water and scrape up the bits on the bottom and let the water absorb the leftovers in the pan.

Pre-heat the oven to 250°.

Add the tomato sauce (mix) you have selected to the casserole along with onion, sugar and acid or lemon. Add the water from the fry pan, scraping as much of the dark bits too. Take the remaining water to rinse out the tomato container(s) and add that to the casserole too. Mix well then place the browned flanken in the casserole. Be sure to add any juices from the

platter to the mix. You should have enough liquid to just but not quite cover the meat. Add more sauces/water if need be.

Place the covered casserole in the oven to slow cook for about 2 hours. It may take 3 to 4 hours depending on the amount in the casserole etc. You want the meat to be at least fork tender. I prefer mine to be almost fall apart and fall off the bone tender.

If you are serving the same day, remove from the oven and let it sit for 30 minutes. Spoon out as much of the grease as possible from the top and discard. Serve as you like with a bowl of the extra sauce on the side for dunking. Or serve from the casserole.

If serving the next day, remove from the oven and let it cool. Then place it in the refrigerator. The next day you can easily remove the congealed fat from the top of the casserole and discard it. If you have a stove-top safe casserole, place it on a burner on low heat to simmer gently an hour or so before ready to serve. Heat it back up to very hot. If you are not sure about the casserole or only have a glass or ceramic one, you can place it back in a 250° oven for an hour or so to heat up to very hot for serving. Don't forget the sauce and the 'dunking bread'.

The sauce can also be used as a topping for kasha, mashed potatoes, noodles or something else fun for this meal. If you have leftover sauce, save it for another day's topping.

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