

Meat Sauce Bolognese

Sugo alla Bolognese

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, minced (about 1 cup)
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and finely shredded (about ½ cup)
- ½ cup minced celery, with leaves

Salt

- 1 pound ground beef
 - 1 pound ground pork
 - ½ cup dry red wine
 - 1 tablespoon tomato paste
 - 3 cups canned Italian plum tomatoes (preferably San Marzano) with their liquid, crushed
 - 3 bay leaves
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 4 cups hot water, or as needed


Makes 6 cups, enough to dress about 1½ pounds dried pasta

Bolognese is a very versatile sauce. Not only can it dress all shapes and sizes of pasta, like fresh tagliolini (page 180) or dried spaghetti or rigatoni, you can also use it instead of the Italian-American Meat Sauce (page 144) in the lasagna on page 156, or in a meaty version of the pasticciata on page 158.

This recipe makes enough sauce to dress 1½ pounds of dried pasta or one and a half recipes of tagliolini — good for feeding a hungry crowd. It also freezes well, if you'd like to enjoy it in smaller quantities. Warm the sauce while the pasta is cooking and toss it with the cooked pasta, adding a little of the pasta-cooking water if necessary to make a creamy sauce. Toss in some grated Parmigiano-Reggiano just before you serve it.

Heat the olive oil in a wide, 3- to 4-quart pan or Dutch oven over medium heat. Stir in the onion, carrot, and celery, season them lightly with salt, and cook, stirring, until the onion is translucent, about 4 minutes. Crumble in the ground beef and pork and continue cooking, stirring to break up the meat, until all the liquid the meat has given off is evaporated and the meat is lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Pour in the wine and cook, scraping the bottom of the pan, until the wine is evaporated, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste and cook a few minutes. Pour in the tomatoes, toss in the bay leaves, and season lightly with salt and pepper.

Bring to a boil, then lower the heat so the sauce is at a lively simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the sauce is dense but juicy and a rich, dark-red color. (Most likely, a noticeable layer of oil will float to the top toward the end of cooking.) This will take about 2 to 3 hours — the longer you cook it, the bet-



ter it will become. While the sauce is cooking, add hot water as necessary to keep the meats and vegetables covered. The oil can be removed with a spoon or reincorporated in the sauce, which is what is done traditionally.

To serve 2: Boil 8 ounces of your choice of fresh or dried pasta until done. While the pasta is cooking, warm the sauce over medium heat. Fish the pasta out of the boiling water with a large wire skimmer and drop it directly into the sauce in the skillet. Bring the sauce and pasta to a boil, stirring to coat the pasta with sauce. Add some of the pasta-cooking water, if necessary, to make enough of sauce to coat the pasta lightly. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese to taste. Check the seasoning, adding salt and pepper if necessary.

