

Bolognese

This recipe is meant for the little more advanced home cook. It will take about 2.5 to 3 hours to complete, but it is worth your while. You will never use store bought pasta sauce after you made this Bolognese. I wrote this with our Flying Leap Vineyard Sangiovese (Classico) in mind and in the sauce.

Ingredients:

300gr lean ground beef
200gr seasoned ground pork (i.e. Jimmy Dean pork sausage)
2 celery sticks
2 medium carrots
1 teaspoon crushed garlic (use more or less as you please)
1 big can peeled tomatoes (get the Cento brand from Italy)
3 thick slices of bacon (or 50gr of real speck if you can get your hands on it)
1 small can tomato juice (i.e. V8)
3 sprigs of thyme
2 bay leaves
300ml beef stock (homemade preferred)
150ml red wine
25ml heavy cream (optional)
Sugar
Sweet paprika
Salt & pepper

Clean and finely dice the onion, carrots, and celery. Throw the bacon slices in a medium size pot and start browning it just a couple of minutes until you have grease in the pot. Remove it and set aside.

Add onion, carrots, celery, and garlic. Cook over medium heat for about 10 minutes. Remove and set aside with the bacon.

Now brown the ground pork and beef on high heat. Keep pressing and dividing it with a spoon so you get nice small crumbles. Keep doing this until it gets nice and dark and is heavily roasted. Add tomato paste and a big pinch of sugar and keep browning for another 3 minutes.

Return the veggies and bacon to the pot, and season with paprika and pepper. Add the tomatoes (with juice), bay leaves, thyme and wine and boil until most liquid has evaporated.

Turn heat to low, add the beef stock and let simmer for about 1.5 – 2 hours stirring from time to time. Occasionally add tomato juice so not all liquid evaporates.

After it's done simmering fish out the thyme, bacon, and bay leaf and discard. Add the heavy cream (optional) for a milder and smoother sauce. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and sugar.

This will also make a perfect lasagna stuffing. Make a béchamel cheese sauce (melt 2tsp butter, add 2tsp flour and stir till smooth. Add 1 ¼ cup hot milk, bring to a boil stirring constantly and melt in 2 cups of parmesan.)

Alternate Bolognese, cheese sauce, and noodles. Top with lots of shredded cheese (the Italian blend works well). Cover with foil and bake for 45 minutes at 350F, uncover and bake another 15 minutes. Let sit for 10 minutes before serving so it doesn't fall apart.

The Bolognese also freezes very well. Consider making double the recipe and freeze in portions. That way you'll always have it handy.