Authentic Ragù alla Bolognese

Traditional Italian Bolognese Sauce | Makes 6 servings

Recipe Information

• Preparation Time: 20 minutes

• Cooking Time: approximately 3 hours

• Total Time: approximately 3 hours 20 minutes

• Servings: 6

Ingredients

• 14.1 oz (400 g) coarsely ground beef, preferably chuck

• 5.3 oz (150 g) fresh, unsmoked pork pancetta, finely chopped

• 2.1 oz (60 g) onion, finely chopped

• 2.1 oz (60 g) carrot, finely chopped

• 2.1 oz (60 g) celery, finely chopped

• 3 tbsp (45 ml) extra-virgin olive oil

• 1/2 cup (120 ml) dry red or white wine

• 7.1 oz (200 g) tomato passata (strained tomatoes)

• 1 tbsp double-concentrated tomato paste

• 1 cup (240 ml) whole milk, optional

• About 1 cup (240 ml) light beef or vegetable broth initially, plus more as needed

• Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

To Serve

• 1 lb (454 g) fresh egg tagliatelle

• Freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano, to taste

Instructions

1. Prepare the vegetables Finely chop the onion, carrot, and celery by hand into small, even pieces.

2. Render the pancetta In a heavy-bottomed pot over medium-low heat, warm the olive oil with the chopped pancetta for about 5 minutes, until it releases its fat. Do not make it crispy.

3. Cook the soffritto Add the onion, carrot, and celery. Cook gently for 8–10 minutes, stirring, until softened without browning.

4. Brown the beef Increase heat to medium-high and add the ground beef. Break it apart and cook for about 10 minutes, until the moisture has mostly evaporated and the meat begins to sizzle.

5. Reduce the wine Add the wine, scrape the bottom of the pot, and cook until the wine has evaporated.

6. Add tomatoes and broth Stir in the tomato paste and passata. Add about 1 cup of hot light broth and bring to a gentle simmer.

7. Slow-cook Partially cover and simmer very gently for 2–3 hours, stirring occasionally. Add small amounts of hot broth as needed; the finished sauce should be thick and creamy, not watery.

8. Add milk, if using Around halfway through simmering, stir in the optional milk and let it reduce completely.

9. Season and serve Season with salt and black pepper. Cook fresh tagliatelle until al dente, drain, and toss with sufficient ragù. Add a splash of pasta water if needed and serve with Parmigiano Reggiano.

Measurement note: Wine, optional milk, and initial broth quantities are practical US adaptations; the traditional recipe specifies a glass of wine, optional milk, and broth as needed.