



# Bolognese: the meat sauce you can use in many dishes!



In its hometown of Bologna, it's eaten with freshly prepared tagliatelle; here, it's served with spaghetti. We're not intending to pick a fight over Bolognese sauce here, so let's try a rapprochement and see how well it turns out.

For the traditional recipe, fry a finely chopped onion in some olive oil or butter until translucent. Chop one carrot and one stick of celery into small cubes and add to the pan until the vegetables caramelize. Remove the vegetables from the pan then fry 150g of bacon cubes. Put to one side when cooked then fry a total of 750g of meat on a high heat (e.g. 600g of finely chopped beef diaphragm and 150g of pork mince, cooked separately) and season with salt and pepper. Add the vegetables, four sage leaves and a sprig of thyme to the meat. Pour on 250ml of milk and cook on a moderate heat. Pour in 250ml of white wine and again leave to boil down. Add 3 teaspoons of tomato paste and 300g of tinned tomatoes and season with nutmeg and pepper. Turn the heat down so that the sauce cooks very gently and occasionally produces a bubble on the surface. Leave to simmer for two or three hours, stirring occasionally, and at the end you've made a sauce that can easily feed an Italian family of eight!

You can vary the meat you use. Basically, the more marbled the meat, the tastier the sauce. Instead of



minced beef, you can use beef diaphragm, pork neck, lamb shoulder or even meat from deer or wild boar. Cooking the meat in milk after frying protects it from the acidic "bite" in the wine and tomatoes. You can also use red wine instead of white.

If you want to use different vegetables, put less celery in the pan, add some garlic and use a red rather than a white onion. Whatever you do, it's worth being patient, as the sauce will only be really tasty if the vegetables are left to fry until the carrot and onion have caramelised and all the liquid has steamed off.

If the sauce tastes a little sour at the end, you can add a little sugar or a pinch of warm cinnamon to balance everything out.

Once cooked and cooled, you can freeze the sauce easily for a couple of weeks and use when you need to produce a plate of pasta in no time at all. The meat sauce can also be used for lasagne or cannelloni.

You can even use it to fill pepper halves, zucchini boats and even foccacia.

Maybe we can agree with the people of Bologna that the most important ingredient is patience, as it is only by taking your time to cut and fry the meat and by bringing the liquids to boil then leaving them to stew for one or two hours that you end up with a personal-best Bolognese sauce on the table.