

The best ragù alla bolognese

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By Anna Del Conte

From The Cook Who
Changed Our Lives

Italian food expert Anna del Conte shows you how to make the perfect ragù. This meat sauce is the perfect example of Bolognese cooking: rich yet well balanced, lavish yet restrained, meaty yet fresh-tasting. This recipe follows closely the precepts of a classic ragù. It is important to chop the vegetables finely, so that they are the size of grains of rice.

Ingredients

60g/2¼oz butter
2 tbsp olive oil
1 garlic clove
60g/2¼oz unsmoked
pancetta, finely chopped
1 small onion, very finely
chopped

Method

1. Heat the butter and oil in a heavy-based saucepan. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute, then remove it. Add the pancetta and cook for 5 minutes, stirring often. Add the onion and, when it begins to soften, stir in the carrot, celery and bay. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring often.
2. Add the beef, turn the heat up to high and cook until medium-brown and nearly crisp, crumbling it in the pot using a fork. You need a high heat so that the meat

Prepare

Less than 30 mins

Cook

Over 2 hours

Serve

Serves 4

Dietary

Egg-free | Nut-free

1 carrot, very finely
chopped

1 celery stick, very finely
chopped

1 bay leaf

400g/14oz lean chuck or
braising beef, coarsely
minced

2 tbsp tomato purée

150ml/5fl oz red wine,
such as Sangiovese or
Barbera

2 pinches grated nutmeg

150ml/5fl oz beef stock

150ml/5fl oz whole milk

salt and freshly ground
black pepper

tagliatelle, to serve

browns rather than stews, but be careful not to let it
become too brown and hard.

3. Add the tomato purée and cook for 2 minutes. Add the wine, nutmeg and stock. Bring to the boil, then turn the heat down to very low, so that the mixture reduces very slowly.
4. Set the lid askew over the pan and cook for about 2 hours, adding a couple of tablespoons of milk from time to time. By the end all the milk should have been added and absorbed, and the ragù should be rich with the texture of thick soup.
5. Taste and adjust the seasoning. The ragù is now ready. Boil the tagliatelle and serve with the ragù.