

Hungarian Goulash

The first thing to understand is that this recipe is all about patience and low, even temperature. The best cooking vessel to use depends mainly on how much you want to make. The recipe below is made to serve 7 – 8, and the reason I choose this high yield is that you can always use the extra as leftovers and, due to the time it takes to make it, you might as well have extra. For the 7 – 8 servings I suggest using a heavy stainless steel roasting pan that can span across two burners on your stove. However, if you were to choose to cut this recipe in half for a small group then I would suggest a cast iron or earthenware vessel such a Le creuset.

Secondly, this recipe can be made the same day you plan to serve it; however I highly recommend making it the night before so that the sauce and meat can truly come together and develop a deeper, richer flavor. This also frees you up to better entertain your guests while also impressing them by how effortlessly you are able to produce such a wonderful meal.

5 pounds beef chuck (fat trimmed, cubed or cut about 1 ½ inch long, ¾ inch thick)
5 large yellow onions (sliced thick wedges)
8 Tbls tomato paste
3 Tbls hot paprika (Go for real Hungarian paprika)
1 Tbls sweet paprika (Go for real Hungarian paprika)
2 tsp dried oregano
¾ tsp fresh grated nutmeg
3 branches fresh rosemary
about 4 tsp salt
Pepper to taste
5 cups water
2 Tbls AP flour
Extra Virgin Olive Oil (as needed)
4 Tbls sweet butter (for the finish)
1 lb fettuccini (Can use egg noodles; serve with potato dumplings or even rice)

1. Place roasting pan over two burners on your stovetop and pour enough olive oil to coat entire bottom of the pan. Set burners to low-medium flame. Once the oil is heated, add onions with a healthy pinch of salt and toss to coat in the oil. Cook over low-medium flame until onions turn translucent but do not allow them to take on any color.
2. Reduce flame to low. Make sure the onions are evenly spread out on the pan bottom and add the beef slices by placing them on top of the onions in an even layer. The beef should cover the onions completely but make sure that none of the pieces touch the side of the pan. The onions should create a cushion between the pan bottom and the beef.
3. Sprinkle another pinch of salt over the beef. Next, sprinkle all the paprika over the beef evenly (I like to use a sifter for this to create a fine and even layer.) Now add the oregano and nutmeg again, evenly over the beef. Lastly, place two (of the

three) rosemary branches on top of the beef. (Do not disturb the layers you have created.)

4. Cover the roasting pan tightly with aluminum foil. Check to make sure that the flame is on low. After about 3 – 5 minutes you should hear the mixture bubbling. Allow the mixture to cook like this for 35 minutes and then loosen the aluminum foil to allow a little steam out of the pan. After another 5 – 10 minutes remove the foil (do not discard) and turn all the pieces of meat over. Check to make sure the onions are not burning. You should notice that the meat and onions have released a lot of their juices. Place the foil back on top of the pan (loosely) and allow the mixture to cook over low heat for another 45 minutes.
5. Now place saucepot on the stove over medium-low flame, add the five cups of water and whisk in the flour slowly, making sure that no lumps form. Now add the tomato paste and again whisk until it is combined. Allow this mixture to come up to a gentle boil but make sure to whisk regularly.
6. Remove the foil from the roasting pan, remove the two branches of rosemary from the pan and add the boiling water-tomato paste mixture. Turn the beef and onions over in the sauce. The cooking liquid should just barely cover the beef and onions. Bring this mixture back to a simmer over medium-low flame and cover loosely with the foil so that steam can escape from the pan. Cook this mixture for an hour to an hour and a half, and stir gently once or twice to make sure that the mixture is cooking evenly.
7. It's at this time that you should taste. Check to make sure that the beef is tender. Season with salt and pepper. Then turn off the heat.
8. If you want to serve the same day, let this mixture sit for about an hour before going to the next step. If you want to use this for the following day, move the mixture to a bowl and place in an ice bath to cool it quickly, then cover it tightly and place in the refrigerator.
9. When ready to finish, place Goulash in a pot and set over low heat. Bring another pot of well-salted water to boil for the pasta. Add the pasta to the boiling water and cook according to the instructions on the package.
10. While waiting for the pasta, set the butter out on the counter and cut into cubes. Strip the last branch of rosemary for its leaves and chop them. By the time the pasta is finished, the Goulash should be perfectly heated through. Taste for seasoning one last time and then add the butter and stir gently until combined.
11. Strain your pasta and toss in olive oil. Set the pasta on a plate and hollow out a circle in the middle. Pour one or two (depending on the party) ladles of goulash into the center of the plate and sprinkle with the fresh chopped rosemary. Clean the rim of your plate with a warm, moist paper towel and serve.
12. Be prepared for praise.