

RECIPES

The Ultimate Bolognese Sauce

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USER RATINGS

**SERVINGS: MAKES 6 CUPS**

This makes enough sauce for three 12-oz. portions of pasta, but leftover sauce is a good thing. Freeze it for next time. Learn more [here](#).

Ingredients

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Sauce

2 bay leaves**3 whole cloves****2 teaspoons fennel seeds****1½ teaspoons crushed red pepper flakes****¼ teaspoon black peppercorns, plus more freshly ground****1 tablespoon olive oil****3 ounces chicken livers, rinsed, finely chopped****1½ teaspoons kosher salt, plus more****½ large onion, finely chopped****½ small bunch thyme****¼ cup Mama Lil's Pickled Kick Butt Peppers in Oil or Peppadew peppers****5 garlic cloves, finely chopped****1 14-ounce can whole tomatoes****⅓ cup red wine****1¼ pounds ground beef chuck (20% fat)**

1 pound pork shoulder (Boston butt), ground

1½ cups whole milk

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

Pasta

12 ounces pappardelle

4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

3 ounces Parmesan, finely grated (about ¾ cup)

Special Equipment

A spice mill or a mortar and pestle

Preparation

Sauce

Toast bay leaves, cloves, fennel seeds, red pepper flakes, and whole peppercorns in a dry small skillet over medium heat, tossing often, until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Let cool; transfer to a spice mill (or mortar and pestle) and finely grind.

Preheat oven to 250°. Heat oil in a medium ovenproof pot over medium-high. Add livers and stir to coat; season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until livers are deeply browned (they will look almost burned), 5–8 minutes.

Add onion, thyme, and Mama Lil's peppers; stir to coat. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper and cook, stirring as needed, until onion is golden brown and soft, 5–8 minutes. Add garlic (adding garlic after onion has been going for a while will keep it from burning) and stir to coat. Cook, stirring often, until garlic is soft, about 2 minutes. Stir in spice mixture and 1½ tsp. salt (this will toast the spices one more time, deepening their flavor).

Add tomatoes and wine, stirring and scraping up any browned bits. Mix in beef and pork (mixture will be fairly stiff, but will soften and loosen as it cooks). Add milk and mix well; everything should be evenly coated. Cover pot and braise in oven 6–8 hours. (Resist the urge to check on it. It's fine! We promise!)

Remove pan from oven. As the sauce cooks, it will firm up (looking somewhat like meatloaf); stir sauce to loosen. Pluck out thyme and, using an immersion blender, puree sauce until mostly smooth. Add vinegar; taste and season with more salt and pepper as needed.

Pasta

Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until al dente. Drain, reserving 1½ cups pasta cooking liquid. Toss pasta and butter in a very large skillet set over medium heat. Ladle in 1½–2 cups sauce—enough to coat pasta well—and cook, adding pasta cooking liquid as needed, until sauce is thick and glossy; season with salt and pepper. Serve topped with Parmesan.

Do Ahead: Sauce can be made 5 days ahead. Let cool; cover and chill, or freeze up to 1 month.