

RIGATONI BOLOGNESE

Serves 4 - 6

Ingredients:

1 LB grass fed ground beef
1 medium carrot
1 small sweet onion
2 cloves of garlic, minced
a handful of fresh basil
28 oz. diced tomatoes
2 TSP fennel
1 TBSP Italian spice blend
salt and pepper

Bolognese (bollo - nyay - zay) is named after the Italian city of it's origin, Bologna. Ground beef and a little patience turns a hearty red sauce into a wonderfully thick and meaty sauce. Carrots add a hint of sweetness. You can make this sauce ahead and jar it for later use over pasta, as a pasta bake, or lasagna.

Instructions:

1. Start with sweating a diced onion, carrot and garlic. You can either finely dice these, or sometimes I use a mandolin on it's thinnest setting. Using a little bit of olive oil, you want to soften all the veggies.
2. In another skillet. Brown the ground beef on medium high heat, mincing as you go with a wooden spatula. Get the meat as finely broken up as possible. As soon as the last trace of pink goes away, turn off the heat.
3. When the vegetables are soft and the onions are translucent, add the tomatoes. A can of generic diced tomatoes will work, but I use jarred San Marzano tomatoes, notoriously the best sauce tomatoes around.
4. Add the basil and the dry spices. Then allow the sauce to simmer for 20 minutes and reduce some of the liquid. At this point I like to use an immersion blender to homogenize the consistency of the sauce.
5. Add the minced beef into the sauce pot. Allow the sauce to gently simmer uncovered. Bolognese should be very thick, so you'll need to evaporate a lot of the water in the liquid. The result will be a thick dark red sauce that will stick to the pasta. The tomatoes will start out bright red and darken as it cooks down. I try to allow this sauce to gently bubble for at least an hour.
6. Serve immediately over hot spaghetti or rigatoni, shown, with grated pecorino romano.

