

Spaghetti Bolognese

REF:

Serves 4

Cuisine: Italian

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 60 minutes

Ingredients:

400g	Beef mince
1	Onion sliced
2 cloves	Garlic finely chopped
1	Red pepper chopped
6 rashers	Streaky bacon chopped
¼ bottle	White wine (2 glasses)
1 stick	Celery chopped
1	Carrot chopped finely
1 tbsp	Plain flour
1 tin	Chopped tomatoes
3 b	Bay leaves
2 tbsp	Tomato puree
6	Large mushrooms chopped or sliced
Handful	Basil and more to garnish at the end
Pinch	Lazy red chillies or chopped fresh chillies
150ml	Chicken stock
1	Star anise

Dried spaghetti
Grated parmesan cheese

Method:

1. Take a deep saucepan and add water to $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Add salt and a drizzle of olive oil. Put on a medium heat and bring to the boil while you prep the vegetables and other ingredients.
2. Chop the garlic, onion, pepper, celery and bacon.
3. Put a chef's pan onto a medium heat and add the garlic for a minute to soften and give some flavour to the pan.
4. Add the onions and the pepper and fry until softened and the edges of the pepper colour-up.
5. Add the mince on a slightly higher heat now and brown it.
6. Add the wine and mix in well. Cook until bubbling and the alcohol burns off.
7. Add the flour and stir in well.
8. Add the stock and stir in well.
9. When that starts to simmer, add the tomatoes, carrots, celery, mushrooms, stirring each time.

10. Add the tomato puree, basil and finally the chilli and star anise.
11. Cook, adjusting the heat down until it simmers, for about 30 minutes or until the carrots are soft and the liquid in the mix has reduced the whole thing to a sauce consistency – take it down to your preference – firm or more loose. You can always add a bit of water or stock if it goes too far but don't let the bottom stick to the pan at all.
12. Meanwhile keep the water in the big pan bubbling and when your sauce mixture is approaching the right consistency, bring the water back-up to the boil.
13. When boiling add the spaghetti to the water and cook until soft but al dente – test a few strands now and then until cooked as you like it. Al dente should have a tiny white core still visible if you cut a strand of pasta.

To Serve:

Remove bay leaves and the star anise from the sauce and then ladle into a serving dish. Drain the spaghetti and add to a separate serving dish, roll in a couple of knobs of butter or drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle liberally with Parmesan and the basil chiffonade. Serve immediately.

I like to serve this separately like this, so folks can dig in and make complete pigs of themselves! However, for a more refined serving, take a carving fork and roll some spaghetti around into coils and slide off the fork into a pasta bowl, place a couple or large spoonfuls of sauce on top – can even do two layers like that – sprinkle the top with parmesan as before.

I like to put out a big lump of fresh Parmesan and a fine grater so you can get involved and use as much cheese as you like.

Chef's Notes:

The sauce can be frozen (in fact it gets better for this) and used to repeat the dish or a sauce for other combo's including amazing lasagne, meatballs, penne etc – its even great on jacket potatoes as a hearty lunch or snack.