

Bean-guine



by Katie Caldesi

Per serving

NET CARBS	FIBRE	PROTEIN	FAT	KCAL
5g	2g	21g	21g	312

Serves 8 people / Makes approx. 1.5kg (3lb 5oz) ⌚ 2 hours 40 mins cooking time

Traditional Tuscan Ragù with green beans

This is a rich and utterly delicious ragù – there is always some in our fridge. It is a sauce I have been making for the last 20 years, ever since I married into an Italian family. The only difference is that instead of having it with pasta, we now eat it with Cabbage pappardelle.

We always make a lot of this when we cook it, as it freezes well. Giancarlo's father, Memmo, used to make it every 14 days, and he would pour it into glass jars and store it in the fridge. Every day at 1pm he would unscrew a jar and warm it up to have with his pasta. For 2 weeks he had an easy lunch before he made the next batch.

Do try and find coarsely minced meat that has about 15% fat in it; the fat will add flavour and prevent the ragù from becoming dry. The vegetables can be cut into tiny pieces in a food processor but be careful that you don't end up with a purée. Traditionally a ragù is made on the hob; even more traditionally, in a cauldron over a fire as Giancarlo's mother and grandmother did. You can cook a ragù in a lidded casserole in the oven for 1½ hours at 190°C/170°C fan/375°F/gas mark 5 but it doesn't have quite the same texture as something that has been lovingly stirred over a period of time.

Bean-guine

INGREDIENTS

4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 garlic cloves, lightly crushed
1 medium carrot, very finely chopped
2 large celery sticks, very finely chopped
1 red onion, very finely chopped
2 sprigs of rosemary
1 bay leaf
1–2 teaspoons salt
800g (1lb 12oz) minced beef, veal or pork, or a mixture of veal and pork or lamb
200ml (7fl oz) red wine
2 x 400g (14oz) cans Italian plum tomatoes
freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan and fry the garlic, carrot, celery, onion, rosemary and bay leaf with seasoning for about 15 minutes, or until softened.
2. Add the minced meat to the pan and fry until browned, breaking it up with a wooden spoon.
3. Cook the mince for about 20 minutes, stirring frequently, and allowing the water to evaporate from the pan. Any water in the mince should come out at this point, so only add the red wine when you see the minced meat starting to look dry.
4. Let it reduce for 5 minutes until the smell of alcohol dissipates.
5. Pour the tomatoes into a bowl and crush them with your hands (this is Giancarlo's way; my way is to use a potato masher when they are in the pan – the choice is yours!). Add the tomatoes, rinse out the empty cans with a splash of water and add this to the pan.
6. Bring the ragù to the boil, then immediately reduce the heat to a gentle simmer. Cook for at least 2 hours, adding a little more water if the ragù starts to look dry (though this shouldn't be necessary if it is only just simmering). Stir occasionally to make sure it doesn't stick.
7. Remove the rosemary and bay leaf and serve straight away with green beans.

TIP: You can store the ragù in a covered container in the fridge for up to a week or freeze for up to 3 months.