

ULTIMATE BOLOGNESE

Spice Mix:

- 2 bay leaves
- 3 whole cloves
- 2 tsp. fennel seeds
- 1½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- ¼ tsp. black peppercorns

Sauce:

- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 3 oz. chicken livers, rinsed, finely chopped
- 1½ tsp. kosher salt, plus more
- Freshly ground pepper
- ½ large onion, finely chopped
- ½ small bunch thyme
- ¼ cup Mama Lil's Kick Butt Peppers in Oil or Peppadew peppers
- 5 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 14-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes
- ⅓ cup red wine
- 1¼ lb. ground beef chuck (20% fat)
- 1 lb. ground pork shoulder (Boston butt)
- 1½ cups whole milk
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar

Pasta and Assembly:

- 12 oz. pappardelle

- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
- 3 oz. Parmesan, finely grated (about 3/4 cup)

1. Spice It Up

Toast spices in a dry small skillet over medium heat, tossing often, until fragrant, about 2 minutes (this releases their flavor). Let cool, then finely grind in a spice mill (or use a mortar and pestle).

2. The Flavor Base

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 and cook, stirring occasionally, until livers are deeply browned—almost burned, really—5–8 minutes. Add onion, thyme, and Mama Lil's peppers; stir to coat. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring as needed, until onion is brown and soft, 5–8 minutes more. Stir in garlic and cook until soft, about 2 minutes. Stir in spice mixture and 1½ tsp. salt.

3. Meat of the Matter

Add tomatoes, then wine, stirring and scraping up any bits stuck to the bottom of the pot. Add meat and stir to combine (the mixture will be fairly stiff but will loosen as it cooks). Add milk and mix well—everything should be evenly coated.

4. Low and Slow

Cover pot with a lid and transfer to oven; bake for 6 hours.

5. Custom Blend

Remove pot from oven. The sauce will have firmed up; stir to loosen. Pluck out thyme and, using an immersion blender, purée sauce until smooth. Add vinegar and season with salt and pepper. Makes 6 cups sauce.

Serve Like a Pro

Finishing pasta in a pan with butter and some of the cooking liquid is what separates restaurant results from home versions. Cook pasta until al dente, drain, reserving 1 1/2 cups cooking liquid, then... 1 Toss pasta and butter in a large skillet over medium heat. 2 Ladle in Bolognese and toss until pasta is well coated (about 2 cups). 3 Toss and add pasta cooking liquid as needed to create a glossy sauce that coats the noodles. Top with Parmesan and serve in warmed bowls.