



Beef Ragu



The flavours of a slow-cooked ragu are soft and mellow, quite different from a typical quick bolognese sauce. It is important to use good quality beef mince which has plenty of fat as this all adds to the flavour and the smoothness of the sauce.

The slow cooking creates a melt in the mouth texture as the meat becomes very soft and very delicious.

The ragu is best served stirred through tagliatelle pasta.

Ingredients (serves 6)

2 tbsp olive oil
100g smoked bacon, chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
2 sticks celery, finely diced
2 carrots, finely diced
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
500g minced beef
2 bay leaves (fresh or dried)
125 ml milk
½ tsp dried oregano
⅓ tsp freshly grated nutmeg
125 ml white wine
1 tbsp tomato puree
400g tin chopped tomatoes
freshly ground black pepper

Method

Heat the oil in a large heavy-based saucepan. Add the bacon and fry gently for 1-2 minutes until slightly browned. Add the onions, celery, carrots, garlic and bay leaves and fry gently on a medium heat for about 7 minutes until soft and the onions become translucent.

Add the minced beef and stir until the beef no longer looks raw and pink.

Add the milk, and simmer gently for about 10 minutes, until the meat has absorbed the milk. Season with a good pinch of salt and plenty of freshly ground black pepper. Add the nutmeg and dried oregano.

Add the tomato puree, pour in the wine, then add the tomatoes with their juice, and stir thoroughly.

Bring to the boil, then lower the heat and cook, uncovered, on a very low simmer (there should only be the occasional bubble) for 3 hours or more.

Serve stirred through pasta and sprinkled with freshly grated parmesan cheese.