

Classic Italian-American Meat Sauce

Makes about 3 cups

- | | |
|---|---|
| ½ cup olive oil | 1 teaspoon salt |
| 1 clove garlic, peeled | ½ teaspoon black pepper |
| ½ small onion, peeled but intact | 2 28-ounce cans crushed tomatoes |
| 14-ounce can tomato paste | 2 pounds meatballs or Italian pork sausage, browned in a skillet |
| 4 ounces red wine | |
| 4 leaves fresh basil (or 1 teaspoon dried) | |

1. Heat oil in a large, heavy pot over medium-low heat. Add garlic and onion and cook until golden brown, to flavor the oil. Remove the garlic and onion, and discard. Add tomato paste and stir into oil. Fill tomato-paste can with wine, swish it around to get excess paste, and pour into pot. Add basil, salt and pepper, turn heat up and stir until liquid has evaporated, about 2 minutes.

2. Add canned tomatoes to the pot, rinsing out each can with water and adding that water (about 2 cups) to the pot. Adjust heat so sauce simmers slowly, and cook, with the lid askew, stirring occasionally, until sauce is thick and silky, 1 to 1½ hours. Add browned meat and cook for up to an hour longer.

3. Serve sauce with pasta and place the meatballs or sausage on a separate platter. Makes enough sauce for 1½ pounds pasta.

— *Mickey Wolf for Newsday*