



Blenditarian Dark Chocolate Bolognese Sauce with Spaghetti

Add some healthy mushrooms for added nutrition

- 1/2-ounce dried porcini mushrooms
- 2 cups hot water
- 2 (each) celery; carrots
- 1 medium onion, peeled
- 3 cloves garlic cloves, peeled
- 6 ounces fresh minced mushrooms
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves;
- 1/2 teaspoon dried sage leaves;
- 1 Tablespoon fresh rosemary leaves
- 1 teaspoon dry oregano
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 8 ounces lean ground beef
- 4 ounces tomato paste
- 1 Tablespoon dark chocolate cocoa powder
- 2 cups dry red wine
- 4 cups prepared tomato sauce
- Salt, ground black pepper; ground red pepper to taste
- 1 Tablespoons basil pesto
- Serve with: Cooked spaghetti
- Garnish: Fresh chopped parsley
- Grated or shredded Parmigiano-Reggiano (Parmesan) cheese

Place dried mushrooms in small bowl; cover with hot water; set aside to soften.

Using a food processor, chop celery, carrots, onion, and garlic to coarse chop. Remove soft mushrooms from liquid; set aside liquid. Place soften mushrooms, fresh mushrooms, and herbs in food processor; process to fine chop.

Add olive oil in large sauce pot. Over low heat, sauté chopped vegetables herbs, and mushrooms. Add beef, breaking up any lumps; cook to combine with the vegetables.

Stir in tomato paste and cocoa powder; cook about 5 minutes to combine. Deglaze with red wine and reserved mushroom liquid. Add tomato sauce; bring to a boil; reduce heat to low heat or simmer for 1-1/2 to 2 hours; stir occasionally. Season to taste with salt, black pepper, and red pepper. Stir in basil pesto. Yield: About 8 cups sauce

To serve with ½ pound cooked spaghetti: Add 1 cup prepared sauce to al dente cooked pasta; toss to coat; add additional sauce as desired.

To serve: Place spaghetti on large serving plate; top with chopped fresh parsley and sprinkle with Italian grated or shredded cheese.

Serves: 4

Preparation Time: 20 minutes Cooking Time: 2 hours

Recipe Inspired by: Chef Maria Dietz, Sous Chef, The Hotel Hershey
The recipe is a family favorite from her grandmother, Rosalia Natale.

Cook's Note: If fresh herbs aren't available, use dry herbs as desired.
Recipe can also be prepared vegetarian by eliminating the meat and adding more mushrooms.

A Blenditarian recipe reduces the amount of meat, replacing it with mushrooms, which makes the recipe healthier.

Comfort Recipe: There is nothing better than one of those special comforting recipes from Grandma. We enjoyed meeting Grandma Rosalia at the Hershey Chef Demonstration and watching Chef Maria prepare this family favorite dish using all ground beef in place of mushrooms.

About the Recipe: We added a healthy Blenditarian touch to this classic recipe, adding some nutritious mushrooms in place of all meat. The recipe makes about 8 cups, so it can be used to prepare several meals or be frozen until needed. It does have a long cooking time, so it would make a great slow cooker recipe. One taste of that rich thick sauce takes you right to Italy for dinner. Just add some of that delicious crunchy Italian bread.

Delizioso!