

Recipe 171024



1 large eggplant cubed medium

1 larg zucchini, cubed medium

30 oz oyster or button or baby bella mushrooms, sliced

If using oysters, cut the pieces pretty thin as they don't soften like button & baby bellas do
5-8 quarts of tomatoes – 20 or 30 (about 9 pounds) of them in every shape and size. Good plums are nice but so are other types. Get the most strong smelling tomatoes that you can. Second at the farmers market are great! Cut in quarters or eights.

*(1 box Pomodori tomatoes, strained or crushed - if needed. But if you have enough flavorful tomatoes, this won't be needed. If flavor isn't good or quantity isn't enough, add it.)

1 lb. ground beef (up to 2 lbs.)

1 lb. Italian sausage meat (sausage removed from casing)

2 lb. Italian sausage, cut into 1 inch chunks

3 large onions (4 c), cut in quarters and then sliced thin – or chunked

5-7 cloves garlic, smashed and chopped up a bit

3.5 green peppers or

4 Italian green peppers or

3-8 banana peppers (can be brined)

2 small hot-ish pepper (long thai) or some hot pepper flakes

3/4 c celery (2 large ribs), chopped smallish (can be brined)
1/2 bunch cilantro, chopped small
7-10 bay leaves
1 loosely packed pint whole basil leaves or a lot of dried basil
plenty thyme, oregano and rosemary
A handful of coriander powder or seeds
Cumin powder or seeds
2 Israeli containers tomato paste
2 c dry red wine
S & P
Parmesan rinds, if you have them.

Brown sausage pieces in a skillet and as each piece browns on all sides remove to bowl. When they cool, refrigerate them until it's time to add to sauce.

Remove most of the oil from skillet, warm it again and add plenty of EVOO. Fry eggplant over med flame until it loses its white aspect and remove to bowl (or add to sauce if it's time).

Fry onions in a large pan over med flame until begin to turn translucent or even brown, then bump up flame to high, add garlic and when redolent add peppers (or add peppers and then garlic) and fresh celery (brined celery needs to wait till later). Cook until the veggies are hot.

Add ground beef and loose sausage meats and when browned, add mushrooms and zucchini. Then add tomatoes, cooked eggplant, tomato paste, cilantro, spices, 1.5 c wine, crushed black pepper and Parmesan rinds – but not salt – and stir to integrate it. If you're using brined celery instead of fresh, add it now.

After mixture becomes hot and begins to boil, set on flame diffuser and let cook, covered, on a strong medium simmer for 3 hours. Stir once in a while. Check sauce to see what state of liquidity it's in: if it's still quite liquid, tilt or remove cover until cooking is done. If you remove the cover, increase the flame so it boils at the rate you need it to boil.

At some point after the 2 hour mark, you'll notice that the tomatoes will release their liquid and the sauce will become more watery than before, but it will also become more tomato-ey and red. This is the point at which the sauce transforms from a soup into a sauce.

At the three hour point, you can add another 1/2-1 cup of wine and feel free to add more oregano, thyme, pepper and a bit of cumin – all to taste. Turn up the flame and add salt and cooked sausage pieces. Keep covered. Turn flame back down when sauce boils. Continue cooking on low flame, stirring often. After 15 minutes, add in basil. Turn up flame to remove grease before serving (or wait until refrigeration has caused it to congeal).

This recipe takes about 6 hours to make, start to finish. Serve over hot pasta. It's delicious.