

Pork Shoulder Ragu for a Crowd

Big Night In by Domenica Marchetti (Chronicle Books, 2008)

Internet Address:



3 pounds Boston butt roast (pork shoulder) in one or two pieces

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1/4 cup olive oil

3 large yellow onions, diced (5 cups)

4 cloves garlic, minced or smashed

1 cup dry red wine

7 cups canned tomatoes, chopped, with their juices

4 whole bay leaves (I used Turkish just because I prefer them to California bay leaves)

Two sprigs fresh rosemary (each about 4 inches long)

1 pound Italian sausage, mild (I used half mild, half spicy)

About 3 pounds short pasta, cooked (I used penne rigate, my favorite)

1/2 cup Italian parsley, chopped (my addition)

1 cup grated Parmesan cheese (or more, as needed for serving)

Pork

Carolyn T's Blog - Tasting Spoons
<http://tastingspoons.com>

Servings: 12

Notes: If using bone-in pork shoulder, you'll want to have about 4 pounds. It will be more flavorful if you use the bone-in, but boneless works just fine too.

1. Season the pork shoulder well with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a large, heavy-bottomed Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Brown the pork on all sides, 3 to 4 minutes per side, until it is evenly browned. This will take at least 15 minutes. Remove pork to a large bowl or plate.

2. Reduce heat to medium and add the onions, stirring well to coat with the oil. Saute until translucent, about 10 minutes, adding the garlic during the last minute of cooking. Add the pork back to the pot, raise the heat to medium-high, and pour in the wine. Let it boil for a minute before adding the tomatoes, bay leaves, and rosemary. Reduce the heat to medium-low.

3. If using bulk sausage, break it into little clumps and add it to the pot. If using sausage links, remove the casings and squeeze the meat into the pot, breaking it up well. Give a good stir, cover, and simmer very gently for 2-1/2 hours, turning the roast over at least once so the other half is submerged in the sauce. Test the meat for tenderness (I simmered this closer to 3 1/2 hours), and continue to cook until the meat is fork tender. Remove the meat to a cutting board and shred it.

As you shred discard the chunks of fat still attached to the meat.) Return the meat to the pot and heat the ragu through. Adjust the salt if desired. The meat is much easier to shred when it's hot or at least warm - once cold, you'll need to slice and chop it - it will still taste fine, but you won't have those nice shreds of meat. The shredding - if done by hand - will take about 20 minutes or so. Also beware you don't over cook the meat - at a point when you simmer pork you will have cooked all the fat and juiciness out of it and it will be dry. So taste the meat as you go. If you use a fork to pull off some meat and it doesn't just almost fall apart, it's not cooked enough.

4. Serve with cooked pasta and top with grated Parmesan cheese and Italian parsley. The sauce is fairly "soupy," so serve in a bowl if preferred. Cool any leftovers, and freeze, if desired, in quart-sized containers.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 431 Calories; 28g Fat (59.9% calories from fat); 32g Protein; 10g Carbohydrate; 2g Dietary Fiber; 111mg Cholesterol; 703mg Sodium. Exchanges: 4 Lean Meat; 1 1/2 Vegetable; 3 Fat.