

# MEALTIME HELPER

MAKING MEALTIME EASY

## Spaghetti Bolognese - Recipe

**Prep time:** 15 minutes

**Cook time:** 1 hour (simmering) — 1 hour 30 minutes for deeper flavor

**Total time:** 1 hour 15 minutes — 1 hour 45 minutes

**Servings:** 4–6

### Ingredients

- 12–16 oz (340–450 g) spaghetti (or pasta of choice)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, finely diced
- 1 celery stalk, finely diced
- 3–4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 lb (450 g) ground beef (or mix 50/50 beef and pork for richer flavor)
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) dry white wine (or extra stock)
- 1 can (14 oz / 400 g) crushed tomatoes OR 1 can (14 oz) diced tomatoes, lightly crushed
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 cup (240 ml) low-sodium beef or chicken stock
- 1/2 cup whole milk (or 1/4–1/2 cup cream) — helps tame acidity and enrich the sauce
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano or Italian seasoning
- 1–2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon salt (adjust to taste)
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- Pinch of red pepper flakes (optional, for a hint of heat)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley or basil (plus extra for garnish)
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan or Pecorino, for serving

### Directions

1. **Prep vegetables:** Finely chop the onion, carrot, and celery (this classic soffritto is the flavor base). Mince the garlic.
2. **Heat the pan:** Warm a large, heavy skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the olive oil.
3. **Sweat the soffritto:** Add onion, carrot, and celery. Cook, stirring occasionally, 6–8 minutes until softened and lightly golden. Add the garlic and cook 30–45 seconds until fragrant.
4. **Brown the meat:** Increase heat to medium-high. Add the ground meat, breaking it up with a spoon. Cook until browned and no longer pink, about 6–8 minutes. Salt early to draw flavor out of the meat. If excess fat accumulates, drain a little, leaving some for flavor.
5. **Add tomato paste and deglaze:** Stir in the tomato paste and cook 1–2 minutes to deepen its flavor. Pour in the white wine (or stock) to deglaze, scraping up browned bits. Let it reduce 2–3 minutes.
6. **Add tomatoes and stock:** Stir in the crushed tomatoes and stock. Add dried oregano, bay leaf(s), red pepper flakes (if using), and black pepper. Bring to a gentle simmer.
7. **Simmer low and slow:** Reduce heat to low and simmer, partially covered, for at least 45 minutes to 1 hour, stirring occasionally. For richer flavor, simmer 1½–2 hours; add a splash of stock or water if it reduces too much.
8. **Finish with milk and herbs:** About 10 minutes before serving, stir in the milk (or cream) and chopped fresh parsley or basil. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt, pepper, or a pinch of sugar if tomatoes are too acidic. Remove bay leaf(s).
9. **Cook the pasta:** Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook the spaghetti until al dente according to package directions. Reserve 1 cup pasta cooking water, then drain.
10. **Combine and serve:** Toss the drained spaghetti with a few ladles of Bolognese and some reserved pasta water until well coated (or serve sauce atop plated pasta). Divide among plates, sprinkle with grated Parmesan and extra herbs, and serve immediately.

## Tips

- For a more traditional ragù, use a longer, gentler simmer and a meat blend (beef, pork, and/or pancetta).
- Leftovers improve after a day—flavors deepen. Reheat gently on the stove; add a splash of water or stock if too thick.
- Freeze in portions for easy future meals.

Enjoy a cozy, savory bowl—classic comfort with layers of slow-cooked flavor.

