

Anna Nanni's Ragù alla Bolognese

MAKES 4 CUPS

"Everyone in this region makes ragù alla bolognese," says Anna Nanni, a cook at Trattoria Amerigo dal 1934, outside Bologna in the city of Savigno. "From ten women, you'll get ten different recipes, all of them traditional." Her ragù (bottom, on blue-rimmed plate) is brightly flavored and slightly tangy, owing to the addition of canned tomatoes.

1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes (with juice)
 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
 1 rib celery, finely chopped
 1/2 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
 1/2 medium carrot, finely chopped
 Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 1 1/4 lb. ground beef chuck
 1/2 lb. ground pork shoulder
 1 4-oz. piece pancetta (see page 97), finely chopped
 1/2 cup dry red wine
 2 tbsp. tomato paste

1. Put the tomatoes and their juice into a blender; purée until smooth and set aside.
2. Heat the oil and butter in a large heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add the celery, onions, and carrots, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring frequently, until soft and lightly browned, about 15 minutes. Reduce heat to low and cook, stirring occasionally, until very soft and caramelized, about 15 minutes more.
3. Add the beef and pork and cook, stirring and breaking up meat with a wooden spoon, until the meat begins to brown, about 10 minutes. Add the pancetta and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until its fat has rendered, about 10 minutes more. Increase the heat to medium, add the wine, and simmer, stirring constantly, until evaporated, about 5 minutes. Add tomato paste and cook, stirring frequently, for 2 minutes. Add reserved tomato purée, reduce heat to low, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until sauce is very thick, about 3 hours.
4. Season ragù with salt and pepper. Toss with fresh tagliatelle (see page 54) or the pasta of your choice, or use in lasagne. Serve with grated parmesan-reggiano.

