



Let me tell you about a meat sauce that's going to change the game in your kitchen. We're talking hearty ground beef and zesty Italian sausage mingling with just the right kick of spices. There's even a hint of sweetness from a dash of sugar that ties it all together. Whether you're layering it up in lasagna, pouring it over spaghetti, or keeping it low-carb with zoodles, this sauce is a surefire hit. Best part? It's made with easy, everyday ingredients you probably already have stocked. Here's the deal—when it comes to making this meat sauce, I like to mix things up with half a pound of ground beef and half a pound of ground sausage. You can stick to just one if that's more your style, but trust me, the combo brings some next-level flavor. Now, don't skip the fennel seeds—those little guys take the taste to a whole new place. And about the sugar? That might just be a Midwest thing. We love a pinch of sugar in our spaghetti sauce! If it's not your vibe, feel free to skip it. This sauce is a total kitchen workhorse. Toss it into your favorite pasta, ladle it over a batch of Spaghetti and Meatballs, layer it up in Lasagna, or get cozy with some Baked Ziti. If you're cutting carbs, it's a must for Zucchini Lasagna or Zucchini Parmesan, and I bet it'd be killer stuffed into zucchini boats, too. Or, keep it classic: just toss it with some spaghetti and shower it with Parmesan. Simple, easy, and oh-so-good!



- **Ground meat:** You can do 2 pounds of ground beef, 2 pounds of ground Italian sausage, or 1 pound of each. Choose lean ground beef if that's important to you.



- **Sugar:** Even a tablespoon is too much for some people. If you don't like the sound of sugar in your meat sauce, please leave it out. In my family, people add ¼ cup or even up to ½ cup.
- **Italian seasoning:** It's easy to make your own homemade Italian seasoning with dried basil, oregano, rosemary, thyme and marjoram. Fresh herbs are delicious if you have them.
- **Fennel seeds:** The seeds make the Italian sausage flavors pop. If you love the taste of a sweet tomato sauce, use just ground beef (no sausage), at least ¼ cup sugar, and omit the fennel seeds.

Meat Sauce Recipe tips and variations

- **Yield:** This spaghetti meat sauce recipe makes 2 quarts (8 cups), enough for 16 servings, ½ cup each.
- **Storage:** Store leftovers in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 4 days.
- **Make ahead:** The sauce can be made, cooled, covered, and refrigerated up to 3 days in advance. To make sauce cool quickly, add it to a bowl set in a vat of ice water and stir frequently.
- **Freezer:** Cool the finished sauce, then pack into freezer-safe containers (I like to use glass Mason jars; leave a half-inch of head space for expansion), and freeze for up to 3 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator. Flat-laying freezer bags work too!
- **Customize your sauce:** Change up this homemade meat sauce recipe to your personal preference. For a lighter sauce, use ground chicken or ground turkey instead of beef and ground pork sausage. You could even add veal for a "meatloaf mix."
- **Herbs:** Stir minced fresh herbs into the final sauce or garnish your dish with fresh parsley or fresh basil.
- **Spicy:** Stir in red pepper flakes to taste with the other spices or pass separately at the table.
- **Creamy:** Add heavy cream to taste (start with ¼ cup and see if you want more). If you have time for the sauce to simmer longer, stir in a leftover Parmesan cheese rind from the freezer.
- **Buttery:** Add 1 or 2 tablespoons butter or a drizzle of olive oil to the sauce for a rich, buttery taste.
- **Thicker:** For a thicker homemade spaghetti meat sauce, simmer to your desired consistency or stir in a can of tomato paste.
- **Bolognese sauce:** Use a mixture of ground beef and pork with mirepoix, a mixture of onion, carrots, and celery sautéed in olive oil. Then, add tomato paste, white wine, and milk, and simmer. To me, the most noticeable factor of bolognese is that it doesn't



contain garlic.

Servings 16 Prep time minutes 5 Cooking time minutes 25 Calories kcal 175

Ingredients

- 2 pounds ground beef and/or ground Italian sausage (see note 1)
- 1 medium onion chopped (about 1 cup)
- 4 cloves garlic minced
- 1 (28 ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 (15 ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar or to taste (see note 2)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried basil
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning (see note 3)
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds (see note 4)
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Instructions

- In a large saucepan or Dutch oven over medium-high heat, add beef, sausage, and onion and cook until mostly browned, about 5 minutes. Drain if desired. Stir in garlic until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
- Stir in crushed tomatoes, tomato sauce, tomato paste, sugar, basil, Italian seasoning, fennel seeds, and bay leaf. Simmer uncovered for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Season to taste with salt and pepper (I like 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper).

Nutrition Facts

16 servings per container

- **Amount Per Serving** **Calories 171**
- **% Daily Value ***
- **Total Fat 12g 19%**
 - **Saturated Fat 4g 20%**
 - **Trans Fat 1g**
- **Cholesterol 40mg 14%**
- **Sodium 105mg 5%**



- **Potassium 319mg10%**
 - **Dietary Fiber 1g4%**
 - **Sugars 4 g**
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- **Vitamin A111%**
- **Vitamin C5%**
- **Calcium36%**
- **Iron2%**