

Slow Cooker Spaghetti Sauce

Scott says, "I strongly recommend that you make this as I do, by cooking it all day in a slow cooker. The goal is to cook it long enough that you are getting a heavily caramelized sauce sticking on the side of your Crock-pot.

I use an oval 5.5 quart Crock-pot, and this starts to occur when it has been on high for around 5-6 hours (although I have noticed that some slow cookers don't get as hot as mine and it takes longer for this stage to occur).

Please do not be afraid of this caramelized residue...it is the secret of this sauce! Once it starts forming, I scrape the sides with a rubber spatula and stir this back into the sauce. I try to do this several times, once more caramelized residue has formed."

The only thing I'd add is to not let the condensation fall back into the sauce from the Slow Cooker lid. Occasionally, as the sauce simmers pull off the lid and shake the water into the sink to prevent the sauce from becoming too watery. ~Laura

1 pound lean ground beef
1 pound ground hot Italian sausage
1 onion, chopped
1 heaping tablespoon minced garlic
3 (14.5 ounce) cans diced tomatoes
2 (15 ounce) cans tomato sauce
1 heaping teaspoon oregano
½ heaping teaspoon basil
3 bay leaves
¼ teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
salt, to taste

1. In a large skillet, cook the meat and onions until the meat is brown and the onions are tender. Add the minced garlic near the end of this step to prevent it from burning.
2. Place meat mixture (without draining) and all other ingredients into a large crockpot. I like my spaghetti sauce less thick, so I do not drain the tomatoes. If you like a thicker sauce, then I would recommend draining them before adding.
3. Cook on high for at least 5-6 hours, or low for 10-12 hours, stirring caramelized sides back into the sauce. As the sauce is nearing completion, it should be easy to skim off any fat with a tablespoon, as the fat will pool on top while it simmers.
4. When complete, stir well, and serve on top of your favorite pasta.

Recipe by Scott Bader. www.cookingphotographer.com