

Classic American Goulash

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1-1/2 pounds ground chuck
1-1/2 cups chopped onion
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1/2 tablespoon dried Italian seasoning
1 teaspoon kosher salt, *or to taste*
1/2 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper, *or to taste*
1 teaspoon seasoned salt (like [Lawry's](#)), *or to taste*
1/2 teaspoon Cajun seasoning (like [Slap Ya Mama](#)), *or to taste, optional*
1-1/2 cups water or beef stock/broth
1 (14.5 ounce) can tomato sauce
1 (14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes, *undrained*
2 small bay leaves
1-1/2 cups dry elbow macaroni

Saute the ground beef until done; drain off excess fat, if needed. Add the onion and garlic and continue sautéing about 5 minutes. Add the Italian seasoning, salt, pepper, seasoned salt and Cajun seasoning; blend. Add the water or beef broth and stir well, scraping the bottom of the pan. Add the tomato sauce, diced tomato and bay leaves, bring to a boil, reduce heat to simmer, cover and cook for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the macaroni, stir, cover and continue to simmer for 15 to 20 minutes longer, or until pasta is cooked through, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat, taste and adjust seasonings and let sit for 5 minutes. Remove bay leaves and serve.

Cook's Notes: For a cheesy variation, cube 1/2 cup of Velveeta and stir in just before serving, until melted and creamy. May also use two cans diced tomatoes, or reduce tomato sauce to 8 ounce can and add in one can of diced tomatoes with green chilies (like Rotel), to kick up the heat. For a more juicy goulash, add a can of tomato soup or increase tomato sauce.

Instant Pot: Prepare as above; set manual for 4 minutes, then quick release. Taste and adjust seasonings as needed.

Chili Mac: Add up to 2-1/2 tablespoons of chili powder (or to taste) and 1/2 teaspoon of cumin to the recipe. Stir in 1/2 cup of Velveeta (or shredded cheddar) as noted above, topping with another 1/2 cup. Cover and cook over low until cheese melts. Garnish with sliced green onions, fresh diced tomatoes, sour cream or your other favorite chili toppings.

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