

Braised Porcini Mushroom and Beef Ragu Pappardelle

.25 ounces dried Porcini mushrooms
2 to 3 ounces Cremini mushrooms
2 meaty beef soup bones
Ground pepper and salt, to taste, for seasoning beef
2 tablespoons flour
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/2 medium onion
8 to 10 baby carrots
1 rib celery
3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
2 strips of cooked bacon (can also be uncooked)
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
2 tablespoons tomato paste
Up to 1 cup good-quality red wine, divided
Mushroom stock (from soaking the Porcini)
Up to 2 cups beef stock, divided
28-ounce can San Marzano peeled tomatoes
3 sprigs thyme
1/4 cup flat-leaf parsley
8 ounces Pappardelle pasta
Good quality Parmesan cheese, for garnish
Additional chopped parsley, for garnish

Place dried Porcini mushrooms in a glass bowl (I used a Pyrex measuring cup) and pour about a cup of boiling water over them. Top with a folded paper towel to keep mushrooms submerged. Allow them to rehydrate for about 20 minutes. Discard paper towel and remove mushrooms, squeezing out the liquid from them. Strain the mushroom stock through a coffee filter into another cup. Set mushrooms and liquid aside.

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Place a Dutch oven or other pot with an oven-proof lid on stove over medium high heat. Season the soup bones liberally with ground pepper and some salt, to taste. Dredge soup bones through the flour, patting flour in to coat. Add oil and the bones to the pot, browning on each side for about 4 minutes. Don't forget the sides! Turn off heat, remove bones and set aside.

Add the onion, carrots, celery, and bacon to a food processor (you can also mince these by hand). Pulse until finely chopped.

Next, finely chop the Porcini and Cremini mushrooms.

Turn heat back on under the pot, and check for amount of oil. Add additional if needed, you'll want about a tablespoon. Add the vegetable mixture, mushrooms, and cayenne pepper and cook for about 5 to 7 minutes, until softened. In the last minute or so, add the garlic and cook until fragrant.

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Next, stir in the tomato paste and 1/2 cup wine, mixing until completely combined. Stir and cook until the wine is reduced by half, about 5 minutes.

Pour in the reserved mushroom stock and about a cup of the beef stock. Add the can of peeled tomatoes, crushing them with your hands as you add them. Also pour in the liquid from the can. Stir until combined, then submerge the soup bones into the sauce. Bring up to a simmer, toss in the three sprigs of thyme and cover tightly. Place in preheated oven.

Cook for three hours, or until meat is tender and falling off the bones. Once tender, remove pot from oven. Remove soup bones to a plate and let cool for about 10 minutes or safe enough to handle.

The sauce will have thickened by this time. Stir in up to another cup of beef broth and red wine and bring up to a slow simmer on the stove.

Meanwhile, cook the Pappardelle pasta according to package directions. Reserve some of the pasta water before draining.

Once the beef is cool enough to handle, shred it with your fingers, discarding any gristle/cartilage.

Return the shredded beef to the sauce and stir in the chopped parsley. Pour in a small amount of pasta water to further loosen up the sauce. Taste sauce and adjust seasonings, if needed.

Plate the cooked and drained pasta on a platter, then pour the ragu sauce over top. Grate a generous amount of Parmesan cheese over top and sprinkle with additional chopped parsley.