

Bolognese with Lentils

Half mince, half lentils: a rich bolognese that stretches the meat further

DIFFICULTY Easy
COURSE Main
CUISINE Italian



PREP
15 min



COOK
60 min



TOTAL
75 min



SERVES
6



FREEZES WELL
Yes

01 Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 1 carrot, finely diced
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 400g beef mince
- 1 cup dried brown or green lentils, rinsed

02 Method

1. Heat the oil in a large heavy pot over medium heat. Cook the onion and carrot for 6 minutes until soft, then add the garlic for 1 minute.
2. Add the mince and cook, breaking it up, for 6-8 minutes until browned.
3. Stir in the tomato paste, then add the lentils, passata, stock, oregano, bay leaf and salt.
4. Bring to the boil, reduce to a gentle simmer and cook uncovered, stirring occasionally, for 40-45 minutes until the lentils are tender and the sauce is thick. Add a splash of water if it gets too thick.
5. Remove the bay leaf, taste and adjust the seasoning. Serve over spaghetti with parmesan.

04 Common mistakes

- **Not simmering long enough** — lentils need time to soften, and the sauce needs time to thicken.
- **Salting too early with old lentils** — very old lentils can stay hard; check the date.
- **Letting it catch** — lentils absorb liquid - stir often and top up with water.

- 700g passata or crushed tomatoes
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 750ml beef or vegetable stock
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ tsp salt

03 Notes & substitutions

- Brown or green lentils hold their shape; red lentils break down into a thicker sauce.
- Grate the carrot for a smoother, hidden-veg sauce.
- Add chopped mushrooms or zucchini for more vegetables.
- A splash of red wine after browning the mince adds depth.

05 Storage & leftovers

FRIDGE	Up to 4 days; the flavour improves overnight.
FREEZER	Freezes well for up to 3 months in portions.
REHEATING	Add a splash of water or stock, as lentils absorb liquid on standing.