

Microwave Spaghetti Bolognese

Bolognese sauce is one of those recipes that everyone should learn to cook. It can be adapted to make lasagne, chilli con carne or even cottage pie and you can add extra vegetables such as mushrooms and peppers to use up whatever you have in the fridge.



Wheat (gluten)*

Nutritional information per portion (403g):

| Energy | Fat | Saturates | Sugars | Salt |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1428kJ 340kcal 17% | 10g 15% | 2.9g 15% | 6.6g 7% | 0.29g 5% |

of an adult's reference intake.
Typical values per 100g: energy 354kJ/84kcal.

Equipment

Weighing scales
Sharp knife
Garlic press (optional)
Chopping board
2.5 litre large, microwave-safe mixing bowl with lid or clingfilm x 2
Vegetable peeler
Fork
Oven gloves
Wooden spoon
Can opener
Measuring jug
Kettle
Measuring spoons
Colander

Ingredients

Serves 4
1 medium onion
1 clove garlic
1 carrot
250g lean minced beef
400g can chopped tomatoes
50ml boiling water
2 x 15ml spoons tomato puree
1 x 5ml spoon dried oregano (optional)
Black pepper (optional)
300g uncooked spaghetti
1 x 15ml spoon vegetable oil

*Presence of allergens can vary by brand – always check product labels. If you serve food outside the home you must make allergen information available when asked.



Top Tips

- Place the bowl on a microwave-safe plate to make it easier to take the hot food out of the microwave.
- Always leave a small opening when covering the bowl with clingfilm to allow steam to escape.

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Method

1. Peel and finely chop the onion and garlic (press or chop the garlic as small as you can) and put into the large bowl.
2. Wash, peel and chop the carrot into pea-sized pieces and add to the bowl.
3. Add the mince and mix together with a fork breaking up the meat until it is well combined. Wash your hands after touching raw meat.
4. Cover the bowl with a microwaveable lid or clingfilm, leaving a small area open, and microwave on full power for 3 minutes. All timings in this recipe are based on using an 800W microwave.
5. Remove the bowl. Stir with the fork, breaking up the mince again, cover and return to the microwave for another 3 minutes. Take care when removing the bowl as it will be very hot. Break up any clumps of mince again.
6. Add the chopped tomatoes to the bowl together with 50ml of boiling water, the tomato puree, oregano and black pepper (if using).
7. Mix everything together with a wooden spoon. Cover again and cook in the microwave on full power for 7 minutes. Remove the bowl, stir well, cover and return to the microwave for another 10 minutes on full power, stirring halfway through.
8. Remove the bowl and leave to stand while you cook the spaghetti.
9. Boil the kettle for the spaghetti. Break the spaghetti into thirds and put in the bowl. Add the oil and mix well with a wooden spoon to coat the spaghetti with oil. Pour over boiling water until just covered and stir well.
10. Put into the microwave and cook on full power for 4 minutes.
11. Remove the bowl and stir the spaghetti. Cover and return to the microwave and cook on full power for another 4 minutes.
12. Take the bowl out of the microwave and leave to stand for 2 minutes. Check that the spaghetti is cooked and is al dente (still has a little bite). Cook for another couple of minutes if it's not soft enough.
13. Reheat the Bolognese sauce on full power for 2 minutes or until bubbling hot. Drain the cooked spaghetti and serve with the Bolognese sauce.

Skills used include:

Washing, weighing, measuring, peeling, chopping, crushing and microwaving.

Something to try next time

- Add additional vegetables for a healthier sauce, such as 2 sticks of finely chopped celery, 100g of sliced mushrooms or 1 finely chopped red, green or orange pepper.
- Flavours develop during cooking time, so with this quick version of Spaghetti Bolognese it's important to check the seasoning before you serve. Add an extra spoon of tomato puree or more herbs or black pepper if needed. Adding 1 x 5ml spoon of balsamic vinegar will produce a sweeter flavour, balancing the sharpness of the tomato purée.

Prepare now, eat later

- The spaghetti could be cooked up to 24 hours in advance then cooled quickly and stored, covered, in the fridge. Add to the sauce and reheat in the microwave until bubbling hot.
- The Bolognese sauce should be cooled as quickly as possible before being frozen for up to 3 months, or kept chilled in the fridge for up to 24 hours. Defrost before reheating until piping hot. You can use this sauce in other dishes, such as lasagne or a savoury cobbler.
- Pasta cooks in 10–12 minutes in boiling water. If you have a hob the spaghetti can be boiled while the sauce is cooking in the microwave.