

Kurt's Gravy – or the “Best Spaghetti Sauce Recipe Ever!”



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 pound sweet Italian turkey sausage
- 1 yellow onion
- 1 red bell pepper
- 4 stalks celery
- 4-5 cloves garlic
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 28 oz. cans Hunt's crushed tomatoes
- 1 6 oz. can Hunt's tomato paste
- 1 cup Parmesan/Romano cheese
- 3 tablespoons parsley flakes
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon basil

DIRECTIONS:

- 1) Using a chopper (see the photo), chop up the onion, pepper, and celery. Mince the garlic and mix all of the vegetables together in a bowl with the olive oil. Set aside. (I usually cover it and put it in the refrigerator.)
- 2) In a large skillet, brown the ground beef, chopping it up as it's cooking. Once there's no visible red left, empty the skillet onto a paper towel to drain it. If you want to drain it as much as possible, you can put it in a colander and hit it with water. Set aside.
- 3) Take the skin off of the turkey sausage and break it up into small parts, about the size of a large marble. Using the same skillet, cook the turkey sausage until it's browned.
- 4) Drain the sausage if needed, and put it back in the skillet. Mix in the vegetables and olive oil, and simmer over low heat (#2 or #3 on your stove) until the vegetables are good and soft. It can take up to about ten minutes or more, but be patient. Make sure they're soft. Try tasting a spoonful of the vegetables on occasion to check.

5) As the vegetables are softening, in a large pot, pour in the crushed tomatoes, tomato paste, cheese, and seasonings. Cover the pot.

6) Once the vegetables are soft, pour the entire meat mixture into the sauce pot. Add the browned ground beef. With a large spoon, mix it all together thoroughly.

7) Sit the pot on a large burner and raise the heat to medium low (I use #4). Keep a very close eye on it and stir it frequently until bubbles start to pop at the top. Lower the heat to very low (#1), and allow to simmer. Continue to stir it fairly frequently, every 5-10 minutes or so, and make sure nothing sticks to the bottom. (If anything does, don't scrape it off, you don't want anything burnt mixed in.)

8) Cover the pot, put it on the lowest heat and stir occasionally, every ten minutes or so. I usually let it simmer for 2-3 hours, but one hour should be fine. Once it's simmering, the hard work is done...open up your favorite adult beverage and enjoy the aroma.

NOTES:

– Any pasta works fine, but farfalle, rotini, ziti, or penne works best. Fresh or homemade pasta works great as well.

– If you don't have one of these choppers, I highly recommend getting one, although a food processor will work well too.

– As Mom always says, the best ingredients are the fresh ones. Go to the store the day of, and get everything brand new. This is a lengthy project.

– Make this worth your effort. Spend some money and get the good stuff. It matters. For the ground beef, use Pat LaFrieda's or whatever grass fed stuff you can find. For the Parmesan-Romano cheese, find a quality brand at your supermarket deli. Don't use the Kraft crap on the shelf. Deli-brand cheese will give the gravy a more gooey texture. It's worth the few extra bucks.

– Yes, use Hunt's tomatoes. Most other brands will make a perfectly adequate sauce, but Hunt's always seems to work better for me.

– 4-5 cloves of garlic is a lot, but garlic is a key component of this, so use your discretion. I've never ruined a recipe with too much garlic (and I've tried!), but I wouldn't use more than 5 cloves.

– You can add 1 teaspoon of black or crushed red pepper, and/or Worcestershire sauce, to give it more zing. But you can always add these things afterwards. Let your guests season to taste.

– There are ways to make it healthier...use 90% lean ground beef or maybe even use ground turkey (I prefer beef), get crushed tomatoes with no salt added (I do this), or use a larger quantity of vegetables. It won't make the sauce any less edible, trust me.