

Sausage Ragu w/ Soft Polenta

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 20 minutes | Total Time: 45 minutes

Step 1: Preparing the Sausage

- 1 lb Italian pork sausage*

To prepare the sausage, remove it from its casing or skin and then break up the meat. Place into a bowl and set aside.

*Note: We used half fennel sausage (mild spice) and half Italian sausage (spicy); however, any combination or type of fresh, quality Italian sausage will do.

Step 2: Starting the Ragu

- 1 onion
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1/4 cup sun-dried tomatoes, in oil
- 2 cups passata* or tomato sauce
- 2/3 cup white or red wine

To start the ragu, finely dice the onion. Heat a pot over medium-high heat and then add the oil. Next, add the onions and let cook for about 5 minutes or until soft and golden.

Meanwhile, drain and julienne the sun-dried tomatoes. Set aside.

Once the onions are ready, add the sausage meat and stir to break up the meat. Let the meat cook and brown for a few minutes before deglazing with the white wine. If using red wine, it does change the color of the sauce a bit, but the flavor is still great. Add the passata and sun-dried tomatoes.

*Note: Italian sieved tomatoes are referred to as passata. Passata can be found in many grocery stores and Italian markets. For the best flavor, try to find a brand that is free of additives, salt and citric acid.

Step 3: Cooking the Ragu

- kosher salt (to taste)
- freshly ground black pepper (to taste)
- heavy cream (optional)

To cook the ragu, bring everything to a boil and then turn down the heat. Let the dish simmer for about 30 to 45 minutes or until the sauce has reduced and has good flavor. Stir occasionally to ensure the sauce does not scorch.

Note: You can cook this ragu for several hours. The texture is wonderful and with the low and slow cooking, the meat really breaks down and the flavors totally come together. You can also add some cream to the ragu as it cooks, but this is also optional.

Meanwhile, you can go ahead and start the polenta.

Step 4: Making the Polenta

- 1 cup polenta*
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 5 to 6 cups liquid (water and/or stock)

*Note: For this dish, a medium cornmeal (preferably stone-ground) works really well as it has a nice, creamy texture once cooked; however, the grind and type of cornmeal you use is up to you.

To make the polenta, pour the cornmeal, salt and cold liquid (either water, stock or a mixture of both) into a medium pot. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, whisking frequently.

*Note: The amount of liquid you use will depend on the consistency you are looking for. Refer to the lesson on How to Make Polenta.

Once the polenta comes to a gentle boil, turn the heat down to low and continue to simmer until the polenta is done to your liking. This may take anywhere from 15 to 45 minutes, depending on the grind of the cornmeal. Taste the polenta for doneness. The grains should be fully hydrated and not al dente.

Once the polenta has cooked to your liking, taste it for seasoning.

Step 5: Serving the Polenta and Ragu

- freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

To serve the polenta, portion it out between 4 to 6 bowls and then top with the ragu.

To finish, top with grated with Parmigiano-Reggiano, if desired. Serve and enjoy!