



THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

A FOOD BLOG

Maccheroni alla Chitarra with Ragù all'Abruzzese and Palottine aka Pasta with Tiny Meatball Sauce (completely rewritten but hardly changed from Domenica Marchetti's The Glorious Pasta of Italy)

Serves 8

I went ahead and bought three different types of meat for this, but I don't think it's necessary. Pick your favorite and buy just that one cut.

I don't usually cook with veal, so I used 8 ounces ground beef plus 4 ounces ground pork plus 1/8 teaspoon gelatin, dissolved in the egg, in the meatballs instead.

Ragù:

2 (28-ounce) cans whole tomatoes with their juice
2 tablespoons olive oil
6 ounces boneless beef chuck roast, cut into four equal pieces
6 ounces boneless pork shoulder, cut into three equal pieces
6 ounces boneless lamb shoulder cut into three equal pieces
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 onion, finely diced

Pasta:

4 cups (18 ounces) all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons semolina flour
1 teaspoon table salt
Pinch ground nutmeg
6 large eggs
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Meatballs:

12 ounces ground veal
1/2 teaspoon salt
Pinch freshly grated nutmeg
1 large egg, lightly beaten
Vegetable oil for cooking

1. For the ragù: If you have a food mill, press the tomatoes through the disk with the smallest holes, discarding the solids. If you don't have a food mill, puree the tomatoes in a food processor or blender.

2. Generously season the meat with salt and black pepper. In a 5-quart Dutch oven over medium-high heat, heat the oil until it just starts to smoke. Add the meat and cook, without moving, until deeply browned on one side, about 2 minutes. Rotate the meat and brown on the second side. Transfer the meat to a plate.

3. Reduce the heat to medium, add the onion, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion softens but does not brown, about 4 minutes. Add the tomatoes, raise the heat to medium-high, and bring to a simmer. Add the meat back to the pot, reduce the heat to medium-low, and simmer, uncovered, for about 3 hours, until the meat is tender and the sauce is thickened. Remove the meat before using the sauce; reserve for another use (or just eat it right then, because it's delicious).
4. For the pasta: Place the flours, salt, and nutmeg in the bowl of a food processor; pulse to combine. Add the eggs and oil; process until the mixture clumps together in large crumbs. Form a small portion of dough into a ball; if it's too dry to stick together, add up to 2 tablespoons more oil; if it's sticky, add up to ½ cup more flour. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and set it aside for 30 minutes to rest.
5. Divide the dough into 8 portions. Work with one at a time, keeping the others covered with plastic wrap or a damp dishtowel. Flatten the dough and pass it through a pasta roller on the widest setting. Fold the dough in thirds, like a letter, and roll it through the widest setting again. Repeat the rolling and folding 3-4 more times, until the dough is smooth. Flour the dough (with semolina flour if you have it) as much as needed to prevent sticking. Adjust the pasta roller to the next-thinnest setting and roll the dough through twice, then repeat on the third-thinnest setting. Thin the dough to the fourth-narrowest setting on your pasta roller. Repeat the rolling, folding, and thinning with the remaining balls of dough. Pass each strip of dough through the thin cutters on the pasta roller to form long noodles that are approximately square in cross section.
6. For the meatballs: Use your hands to evenly combine the veal, salt, nutmeg, and egg. Form the mixture into balls about ½-inch in diameter.
7. In a 12-inch skillet, heat 3 tablespoons oil over medium-high heat until almost smoking. Add the meatballs, and cook until well browned a couple sides, about 4 minutes, turning about once a minute with a spatula. Transfer to the pot with the ragù; keep warm.
8. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add about a tablespoon of salt and the pasta and cook until al dente, about 5 minutes. Drain, reserving about a cup of the cooking water.
9. Return the drained pasta to the pot; toss with about two-thirds of the sauce and meatballs, adding some of the reserved cooking water if the sauce is too thick. Transfer the pasta to a warmed serving bowl (or individual bowls) and spoon the remaining sauce over the top. Serve immediately, with parmesan and crushed red pepper flakes to pass.