

Giusi's RAGÙ

Slow and easy—long-simmered *ragù* is the quintessential Tuscan soul food. There are as many ways with *ragù* as there are cooks. This is ours, learned originally from Giusi, who's made it a thousand times. By now, I think we have, too. On many Saturday mornings, Ed makes a huge pot of *ragù*—tripling, quadrupling the recipe—and another of tomato sauce. We consider these our natural resources. For lunch, while the pots are still on the stove, we spoon *ragù* over *bruschetta*, add some cheese, and run it under the broiler. By afternoon, we're ready to fill several glass containers of different sizes and freeze them. We're then free to pull one out during the workweek.

Serve *ragù* in lasagne or over spaghetti and, as you eat, you know you're participating in a communal rite that's being enacted all over the Italian peninsula.

SERVES 10

- 3 TABLESPOONS EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
- 1 POUND GROUND LEAN BEEF
- 1 POUND GROUND PORK
- 2 ITALIAN SAUSAGES, CASINGS REMOVED
- 1 TEASPOON SALT
- ½ TEASPOON PEPPER
- 2 TEASPOONS FRESH THYME LEAVES OR 1 TEASPOON DRIED
- 1 TO 2 CUPS RED WINE
- 1 CUP *SOFFRITTO* (PAGE 20)
- 2 TABLESPOONS TOMATO PASTE
- 16 TO 20 TOMATOES OR 2 28-OUNCE CANS WHOLE TOMATOES, JUICE INCLUDED, CHOPPED

Pour the olive oil into a 4-quart heavy pot with a lid. Over medium-high heat, brown the meats, breaking up the sausage with a wooden spoon, about 10 minutes. Add the salt, pepper, thyme, and 1 cup of the red wine. After the wine has cooked into the meat, about 10 minutes, add the *soffritto*, and stir in the tomato paste and tomatoes.

Bring the sauce to a boil, and then lower to a quiet simmer. Partially cover, and continue cooking for 3 hours, stirring now and then. Along the way, add the remaining cup of wine if you think the sauce is too dense.



Vino Rosso
Cortona