



Pork Ragu with Pappardelle, Slowly Braised



Ingredients:

- 3 TBLs olive oil, divided
- 2 ½ pounds boneless pork shoulder, trimmed of excess fat and cut into 6 pieces
- 3 large carrots, peeled and diced
- 1 large yellow onion, finely diced
- 1 stalk celery, finely diced
- 8 cloves garlic, finely chopped or grated
- 2 TBLs tomato paste
- 1 cup dry white wine
- one (1) 0.75-ounce package fresh "poultry herb blend" (or approx. 2 sprigs fresh rosemary, 4 sprigs fresh sage leaves and 12 sprigs fresh thyme)
- 2 bay leaves
- one (1) 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 2 cups water or low-sodium chicken broth or stock
- kosher salt and ground black pepper, to season
- 20-30 ounces dried pappardelle pasta or other pasta of choice
- ½ cup heavy cream
- heaping ½ cup grated parmesan
- for serving, as desired: grated parmesan, finely chopped fresh herbs, etc.

Method:

1. Add 2 TBLs olive oil to a 5-qt Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Use paper towels to pat the pork shoulder as dry as possible. Generously season the pork shoulder with 2 tsps each kosher salt and ground black pepper. Once the oil in the pot shimmers, carefully add in the seasoned pork shoulder. Work in batches, as necessary, to avoid overcrowding the pot (which prevents browning). Cook for 4-5 minutes per side, until nicely browned, then set aside.
2. If needed, add the remaining 1 TBL olive oil to the same pot used in Step 1 and reduce heat to medium. Once hot, add in the Soffritto (carrots, onion, and celery), seasoning with ½ tsp each kosher salt and ground black pepper and stirring to combine. Cook, stirring occasionally, until deeply browned, 15-20 minutes.
3. Add the garlic to the pot with the Soffritto. Stirring constantly, cook until fragrant, 1-2 minutes. Add the tomato paste to the pot, stirring to coat the Soffritto. Cook 2-3 minutes, until browned.



4. Increasing the heat to medium-high, pour the white wine into the pot. Stir constantly, using a wooden spoon to deglaze the bottom of the pot. Cook for 4-5 minutes, until the wine is almost completely absorbed into the Soffritto.
5. Tie the herbs together using kitchen twine (or finely chop if you do not have twine), then add to the pot with the bay leaves. Add the crushed tomatoes, water (or broth/stock), and browned pork shoulder from Step 1. Stir to combine. Bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce heat to maintain a gentle simmer. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 2 ½ – 3 hours, or until the pork is fall-apart tender. If the ragu begins to reduce too much (i.e. it loses too much of its liquid too quickly), feel free to add in a splash more water and/or reduce the heat further.
6. Carefully transfer the pork to a plate or cutting board. At this point, you can remove and discard the spent herbs and bay leaves from the pot, as well. Use tongs or 2 forks to shred the pork into bite-sized pieces. Return the shredded pork to the pot with the ragu. Stir to combine. At this point, you can cool and store for later use (see Recipe Notes for storage and freezing directions), or proceed with making the pork ragu pappardelle (below).
7. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pappardelle and cook, stirring occasionally, until the pasta is cooked to al dente according to package directions. Carefully dip a liquid measuring cup into the pot, reserving about 1 cup of the starchy pasta water, and set aside. Carefully drain the pappardelle – do NOT rinse it!
8. Meanwhile, as the pasta boils, bring the braised pork ragu up to a simmer. Stir in the heavy cream and parmesan cheese. Continue to simmer over low heat, stirring occasionally.
9. Add the cooked pappardelle pasta to the pot with the braised pork ragu sauce, tossing to coat. The pork ragu should evenly coat the pasta. Add in some of the reserved pasta water if the ragu needs to loosen up a little; add in an extra handful of parmesan if it needs to tighten up a little. Cook over medium heat for 1-2 minutes, allowing the pasta to meld with and absorb some of the ragu.
10. Portion the pork ragu pappardelle into individual pasta bowls, topping with additional grated parmesan, chopped fresh herbs, and/or crushed red pepper as desired. Serve immediately. Enjoy!