



Zesty One-Pot Meat & Pasta Stew

Feeds 12-16

Ingredients

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 lb ground lamb (If you don't like lamb, use 2 lbs ground beef instead)
- 1 large brown skinned onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 green pepper, seeds and veins removed and chopped
- 8 oz. fresh brown mushrooms, remove stems and slice or pulverize in the processor for kids
- 3 cloves of garlic, peeled and minced by hand
- 3 cups water
- 2-15 ounce cans tomato sauce (I like Muir Glen)
- 1 can (28 oz.) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 Tbsp dried basil (or 4 Tbsp fresh slivered basil)
- 1 Tbsp dried oregano (or 2 Tbsp fresh oregano leaves)
- 1 tsp. regular paprika
- 1 tsp. granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp fine sea salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2½ cups uncooked macaroni or rigatoni (regular semolina pasta OR whole wheat pasta, which makes it a lot more healthful)

Instructions

In a large 5 qt. Dutch oven, crumble beef and lamb over medium-high heat and cook until it is no longer pink. Drain fat but don't wipe out the pan or remove the meat.

Add the chopped onion, green pepper and mushrooms. Cook until soft, about 3-5 minutes. Add in garlic, water, tomato sauce, tomatoes, basil, oregano, paprika, sugar, crushed red pepper flakes, Worcestershire sauce, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, cover and reduce heat to medium-low. Allow to simmer for 20 minutes, stirring halfway through.

Remove the lid and add the dried pasta and stir well. Return lid and continue to simmer for 15 minutes or until the noodles are done, checking and stirring every five minutes. Note that whole wheat pasta might take a bit longer to cook. Once the pasta is al dente, remove from the heat (it

will still appear to have too much sauce) and let it remain covered for 10 minutes to finish absorbing the juice. Stir well before serving.

Leftovers reheat nicely and freeze well

You could give this a Vietnamese twist by subbing fish sauce for worcestershire, and adding fresh mint, basil and cilantro with a squeeze of lime.

OR

You could garnish this with some fresh oregano leaves, feta cheese and diced kalamata olives for a Greek flair.

OR

You can give this a Central American twist with lots of cilantro, some finely diced hot peppers to taste, lime and a dollop of sour cream.

OR

I'm sure ground chicken would taste lighter but wonderful if you aren't anxious to use beef or lamb.

Fresh grated parmesan cheese would be nice on top here but by no means does it need it. We ate ours naked..no cheese. No, we weren't naked!

But of the three bins I have in the freezer, I will make each meal a little special with one of the above tweaks.