

## **Mama Bordonaro's Spaghetti Sauce with Meatballs and/or Brochette**

**Recipes submitted by Louis Bordonaro**

**Nationality/Ethnicity – Italian**

### **The Story Behind the Recipe**

My mother, father, older sister and brother emigrated from Sicily in 1928. My father had actually been here off and on since 1913, working on the railroads in upstate New York. He had to return to Italy in 1916 to join the Italian army, which was fighting the Germans in WWI.

We lived in an older two-story house on the west side of Ithaca, New York, in a neighborhood that was very diverse. On the right side of us was a couple from Ireland and on our left was a couple from Sweden and Italy. Across the street lived a couple from Poland and another couple from Germany. Sprinkled throughout the blocks surrounding our house were more Italians than any other ethnic group.

We frequented the local Italian grocery stores in our neighborhood, which were very small and sold, as I recall, the greatest tasting bread in the world, still warm from the bakery down the street. When you walked in, you could smell the pungent aroma of the cheeses and meats hanging on strings from the ceiling and the olives and pickles in barrels. When entering the store, the owner would always greet me by my first name and ask about my mother and father. Up the street was a Jewish grocery that sold bagels and lox and had a kosher deli. Some of the people who came to work in this store after WWII had numbers tattooed on their arms, but I did not understand the significance of that until much later.

My mother and father both worked, so our main meal was always Sunday, when my mother would rise at 7 a.m. and start her spaghetti sauce. It would simmer on the stove for hours and the smells that wafted through the house were awesome. I enjoyed tearing the Italian bread in half, digging out the center, which was moist and soft, and dipping it into the sauce. I could do that until my mom came into the kitchen and caught me.

We would normally eat around three o'clock, so as to give everyone time to get home. At that time, most people dressed very well for Sunday dinner. After dinner, my father would lay out cheese, homemade wine, and grapes. The next course would be Italian cookies and coffee or milk for the younger ones. For the rest of the evening the adults would talk, catching up on the week's events. No one listened to the radio and, obviously, there were no televisions, just good conversations. What a great time to be growing up!

### **Meatballs**

Ingredients:

- 1½ pounds ground beef @ room temperature
- ½ pounds ground pork @ room temperature

- ½ loaf Italian bread (leave uncovered 1 to 2 days to harden)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 to 3 tablespoons finely chopped parsley
- ⅓ teaspoon garlic powder
- Black pepper to taste
- ⅔ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 eggs @ room temperature, lightly beaten

#### Preparation Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Slice off and discard outer crust of bread, leaving just the inside. Run inside of bread under hot water to soften, squeezing out all of water with hands. Mix together all ingredients thoroughly (using your hands works the best). Roll into approximately 1½" size meatballs. Place on a non-stick cookie sheet (if not using a non-stick sheet, spray with oil or PAM). Bake for approximately 15 minutes, then turn over meatballs and bake another 20 minutes. Meatballs should be nicely browned. Remove from oven and set aside until sauce is being made. Makes about 30 meatballs.

### **Brochette**

#### Ingredients:

- 3 to 4 thin sandwich steaks (can also use top round or sirloin steaks cut into thin slices)
- Chopped garlic (3 to 5 cloves)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 to 3 tablespoons chopped parsley
- Grated Parmesan cheese (may also use thinly sliced pieces of Parmesan cheese)

#### Preparation Directions:

Pound steaks until flattened very thin. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, garlic, parsley and cheese. Roll meat tightly and tie with string. Hold aside until sauce is being made.

### **Sauce**

#### Ingredients:

- 2 to 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 to 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 medium onion cut up
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 5 to 6 sprigs parsley, chopped
- 1½ cans (12 oz) tomato paste (refill can with hot water)
- 1½ cans (28 oz) cut up tomatoes
- 1 to 2 bay leaves
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ½ to ¾ cup wine
- ½ to ¾ cup grated Parmesan cheese

#### Preparation Directions:

Place oil in large saucepan. Saute onion and garlic until softened, but not browned. If making brochette, also brown in oil on all sides. Add oregano, basil, parsley, tomato paste and can of water. Stir and let cook 1 to 2 minutes. Add bay leaves and tomatoes. If making brochette, cover pot and cook thoroughly for about 1 hour. If only making meatballs, add now to sauce. Add enough water to cover meatballs (several cups) and let cook 10 to 15 minutes. Add salt and sugar. Simmer, covered, for 1 to 1 ½ hours, stirring often. Add wine and cheese. Simmer another 5 to 10 minutes. If sauce is too thin, cook uncovered for awhile.