

Stracci with Braised Lamb Ragù

SERVES: 4

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

COOK TIME: 1 hour and 20 minutes

MAKE-AHEAD: The ragù can be made up to 3 days ahead, cooled, covered, and refrigerated. Reheat the ragù in a pot, covered, over medium-low heat, adding some water, as needed, to reach the desired consistency.

RAGÙ

2 large lamb shanks (about 1kg total)
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon olive oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ onion, sliced
3 garlic cloves, smashed
1 long red chilli, finely chopped
2 cups canned crushed tomatoes
1 cup water
15 Sicilian or other brined green olives, pitted and quartered

CHILLI GREMOLATA

1½ tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
Grated zest of 1 lemon
1 long red chilli, finely chopped
300g lasagne sheets, broken into 5cm pieces
3 teaspoons unsalted butter
1½ tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving

There are three things that elevate this family-style pasta dish from good to incredible: the silky, falling-off-the-bone tomato-braised lamb cooked in a pressure cooker; the rustic stracci pasta (*stracci* means “rags” in Italian, and it refers to the shape of the pasta—here I just use lasagne sheets that have been broken into pieces); and the zesty gremolata. Gremolata is an Italian chopped herb condiment and this version is sparked with a chilli bite. A very satisfying dish served as is or paired with a side of seasonal veggies, a green salad and a plummy dry red wine. I always make extra ragù to enjoy during the week.

1. To make the lamb ragù, season the lamb shanks with salt and pepper. Heat a large pressure cooker over high heat. Add 2 teaspoons of the oil and then the lamb and cook, turning occasionally for about 8 minutes, or until browned on all sides. Remove the lamb from the pot and discard the fat.
2. Reduce the heat to medium. Add the remaining 2 teaspoons oil, the sliced onion, garlic and chilli to the pot and cook, stirring often, for about 8 minutes, or until the onion is tender and beginning to caramelise. Add 1½ cups of the crushed tomatoes and the water and return the lamb to the pot.
3. Lock the pressure cooker lid in place and bring to high pressure over high heat, about 15 minutes. Reduce the heat to low to stabilise the pressure and cook the lamb for 50 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow the pressure to subside on its own, about 20 minutes.
4. Unlock the pressure cooker and remove the lid, tilting it away from you to allow the steam to escape. Spoon any scum and oil from the top of the braising liquid. Set aside until the lamb is cool enough to handle, then pull the meat from the bones; discard the bones and cartilage and set the meat aside.
5. Add the remaining ½ cup crushed tomatoes to the pressure cooker, bring to a boil over medium-high heat, and boil for about 5 minutes, or until the sauce is reduced by one-third. Add the lamb meat to the sauce

(continued)

and stir in the olives. Remove the pot from the heat and season the ragù to taste with salt and pepper. Cover to keep hot while the pasta cooks.

6. Meanwhile, to make the gremolata, in a small bowl, mix the parsley, lemon zest, and chopped chilli. Set aside.
7. To cook the pasta, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the pasta and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 8 minutes, or until tender but firm to the bite. Drain the pasta, reserving about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the cooking water.
8. Return the ragù to a gentle simmer over medium-low heat. Gently stir the pasta into the ragù and cook for about 1 minute, adding the reserved pasta water to moisten the mixture as needed. Remove the pot from the heat and stir in the butter and Parmesan cheese.
9. Divide the pasta among four bowls. Sprinkle the gremolata and a little more Parmesan cheese over the top and serve immediately.

VARIATION If you don't have a pressure cooker, use a heavy medium casserole pot instead for steps 1 and 2. For step 3, cover the casserole pot and place it in a 150°C oven. Cook for about 2½ hours, turning the lamb over halfway through cooking and spooning off any scum and oil from the top of the braising liquid. Set aside until the lamb is cool enough to handle, then pull the meat from the bone, and discard the bones and cartilage. Continue as directed in steps 5 through 9.