

# Stewed steak ragù

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Preparation time  
**30 mins to 1 hour**

Cooking time  
**10 to 30 mins**

Serves  
**Serves 6**

This simple ragù imitates an Italian dish that's usually made with fresh beef and tomatoes, simmered for hours until the meat falls apart in delicate fronds at the touch of a fork. Stewed steak in gravy perfectly replicates the slow-cooked tender meat of its grander cousin.

I made both versions side by side to test this recipe, and all of the people I gave them to in blind taste tests preferred this version! The lentils aren't mandatory, but they add extra texture and protein, and make the meal go further; ideal if you're meal prepping for the freezer, or feeding a crowd.



By Jack Monroe

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## Ingredients

- 1 large [onion](#), finely chopped, or 140g/5oz frozen diced [onion](#)
- 1 [tbsp](#) [garlic](#) paste or chopped [garlic](#)
- 2 [tbsp](#) [vegetable oil](#)
- 1 [tsp](#) dried [herbs](#)
- 300g tin sliced or baby [carrots](#), rinsed and drained
- 400g tin brown or [green lentils](#), rinsed and drained
- 2 x 400g tins [stewed steak](#) in gravy
- 2 x 400g tins [chopped tomatoes](#)
- 175ml/6fl oz [red wine](#) (optional, see [Recipe Tip](#))
- 1 [tbsp](#) [vinegar](#) (any kind)

## To serve

- [pasta](#)
- grated [cheese](#)

[Recipe tips](#)

## Method

- Put the onion in a very large non-stick pan, add the garlic, oil and herbs, and cook over a very low heat for 5–6 minutes.
- Add the carrots, lentils and the stewed steak, then pour in the tomatoes, red wine and vinegar. Bring to the boil, then cover and simmer for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent it from sticking and burning. You may need to add a splash of water to loosen it.
- Cook the pasta in plenty of boiling salted water for 8 minutes, or according to the packet instructions. Drain the pasta and serve with the hot ragù on top. Sprinkle with grated cheese.

### [Recipe Tips](#)

This may sound completely off the wall but bear with me; if you don't have or can't afford red wine to sling in your dinner, you can use a surprising substitute instead. Strong black tea, when used in slow-cooked, tomato-based dishes, replicates the deep tannin base flavours that red wine leaves behind once the alcohol has boiled off. Steep one ordinary teabag in 200ml/7fl oz boiling water for 10 minutes, until a deep dark brown colour. Fish the teabag out and discard it, and use the strong tea in place of the wine. This trick really only works with slow-cooked dishes with a tomato base to balance the flavours; unfortunately you can't pour it in a glass and pretend it's a juicy Pinot Noir.

Any leftover ragù can be used for a bolognese style dinner, like this one above, or in lasagne, or thinned out with a little stock and leftover pasta to make a meaty minestrone-style soup, adding a little leftover pasta or some small cooked pasta shapes.

In March 2022 this recipe was costed at an average of £6.35 when checking prices at four UK supermarkets. This recipe is designed to be made in conjunction with a low-cost store-cupboard, for more details [click here to see how our budget recipes were costed](#).