

Beef Rollatini
Rollatini di Manzo
Serves 8

Beef rollatini was not a dish I often ate growing up. Beef was scarce, and this was not a style of cooking my grandma often used, but I learned to make it as a young woman in America, as I became familiar with Italian American restaurant food here. Bracciole, as this dish is also called, were commonly cooked in Sunday sauce, a tomato-based sauce with meat, along with sausages, ribs, and meatballs, and were served as a second course, after the pasta dressed with the sauce. If you double the recipe, a big pot of these goes a long way in serving a tableful of hungry guests. Use a large piece of eye of round to get nice, even-sized slices of beef. You'll have extra sauce here, which will be very flavorful from the long cooking of the beef rolls. You can use it to dress a separate pasta course for the same meal, or to save for another day.

FOR THE BEEF

3 pounds boneless beef eye of round
3 cups cubed crustless day- old country bread
1 cup grated provola
1/2 cup freshly grated Grana Padano
1/2 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley
4 scallions, chopped
4 ounces prosciutto cotto, thickly sliced, diced
1 teaspoon garlic powder Kosher salt

FOR THE SAUCE

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
All-purpose flour, for dredging
1 large onion, chopped
1 cup dry red wine
Kosher salt
Two 28-ounce cans whole San Marzano tomatoes, crushed by hand
3 fresh bay leaves
1 teaspoon dried oregano, preferably Sicilian oregano on the branch
1/4 teaspoon peperoncino flakes

For the beef: Use a sharp knife to slice the beef into eight slices against the grain. Pound them with a meat mallet to make all of the slices an even thickness, just shy of 1/2 inch thick.

Put the bread in a bowl, and add water to cover. Let it soak until it's moistened; then squeeze the water out of the bread and discard all of the water. Put the bread back in

the bowl, along with the provola, Grana Padano, parsley, scallions, prosciutto cotto, garlic powder, and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Mix well to form a cohesive stuffing.

Lay the beef slices out on your work surface with the long sides facing you. Season them with salt, flip them, and season the other sides. Divide the filling among the slices, leaving about an inch border all around. Roll them up, tuck the ends in, and seal with toothpicks to keep the rolls from unrolling. Season the outside of the rolls with salt.

For the sauce: Heat the olive oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Spread some flour on a plate. When the oil is hot, lightly dredge the rolls in flour, and brown them on all sides, in batches, about 5 minutes per batch. Remove them to a plate as they brown.

Once all of the rolls are out, add the onion. Cook, stirring occasionally, until it's wilted, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the wine and 1 teaspoon salt. Bring the liquid to a simmer, stirring with a wooden spoon to loosen the browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Reduce the wine by half, about 2 minutes; then add the tomatoes and 3 cups water. Add the bay leaves, oregano, 2 teaspoons salt, and the peperoncino. Bring the sauce to a simmer, and nestle the rolls in the sauce. Simmer, covered, until the beef is almost tender, about 1 hour. Uncover, and continue to simmer until the rolls are very tender but not falling apart and the sauce is thick and flavorful, about 30 minutes more.

Remove the rolls to a platter and remove the toothpicks. Remove the bay leaves, and serve the rolls with the sauce.