

## Meatloaf is the Ultimate Comfort Food

When the weather is cold, rainy and grey outside, most of us crave something warm and comforting for our insides. And though meatloaf may not be the most glamorous of foods, it sure is comfort food.

Most of us have a favorite meatloaf recipe—and for my generation it probably includes ketchup or chili sauce on top. Here is a basic meatloaf that promises to satisfy those childhood cravings. You will notice that I suggest cooking the meatloaf free form, instead of in a loaf pan. You are welcome to use a loaf pan, but I have found that the grease from the meat often causes the meat to basically “boil” in the juices—resulting in a very wet meat loaf. If you have had that happen, give the free form way a try. Just be sure to line the baking sheet with foil (for easy cleanup) and make sure the pan has a rim to catch the oil drippings.

### Basic Meatloaf

2 pounds ground meat—preferably a combination of ground beef, pork and veal  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 medium onion, finely minced  
1 clove garlic, minced  
2 eggs, slightly beaten  
½ teaspoon dried thyme  
1 teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon pepper  
2 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce  
Dash Tabasco (optional)  
¼ cup heavy cream  
1 cup fresh breadcrumbs  
¼ cup fresh parsley, minced  
8 slices bacon

### Glaze

½ cup ketchup or chili sauce  
3 tablespoons brown sugar  
3 tablespoons cider vinegar

For the glaze: Mix all ingredients in a small saucepan. Heat over low heat. Remove from heat and set aside.

For the meat loaf: In a medium skillet, heat olive oil over medium high heat. Add onions and sauté until softened, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook another minute. Remove from heat and set aside. In a large bowl, combine eggs, thyme, salt, pepper, Dijon, Worcestershire, Tabasco, cream, bread crumbs, parsley, cooked onions and garlic. Add ground meats to the mixture and combine thoroughly. You may need to add more cream (or milk) to the meat mixture. Mold meat into a loaf shape, then place on a foil lined baking sheet that has a rim. Brush with half the glaze, then arrange bacon slices over the loaf, covering the surface of the meat loaf. Bake the meat loaf in a preheated 350-degree oven for 1 hour. The bacon should be crisp and the internal temperature of the meat loaf should be 160-degrees. Remove from oven and cool for 20-30 minutes. Heat remaining glaze and serve alongside meat loaf.

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### Stuffed Meatloaf

*1 small onion, minced*  
*3 garlic cloves, minced*  
*1/4 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley leaves*  
*2 eggs*  
*1/4 cup ketchup*  
*1 teaspoon salt*  
*3/4 teaspoon ground black pepper*  
*2/3 cup dried bread crumbs*  
*1 cup grated Parmesan*  
*1 pound ground beef*  
*1 pound ground pork*  
*2 cups prepared stuffing (any kind)*  
*1/2 cup chili sauce*

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Whisk the first 7 ingredients in a large bowl to blend. Stir in the Parmesan and bread crumbs. Mix in the beef, and pork. Pack half of the meat mixture into a 9 by 5 by 3-inch loaf pan. Spoon the stuffing over the meat in the pan, leaving a 1-inch border around the edges. Top with the remaining meat mixture, enclosing the stuffing completely and pressing firmly. Spoon the chili sauce over the top.

Bake, uncovered, until the meat loaf is firm to the touch, about 1 hour and 15 minutes.

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For a little variety, this is my favorite Italian style meatloaf. Children may not like this unless they do not mind lots of tomatoes, garlic and basil, but for a change of pace, it is delectable. Serve this with polenta, garlic bread and a crisp green salad.

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### Italian Meat Loaf

2 pounds ground beef, pork, and veal  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 medium onion, minced  
1 stalk celery, minced  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
2 eggs  
1 teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon black pepper  
½ teaspoon crushed red pepper  
1 ½ cups canned crushed tomatoes, drained  
1/3 cup heavy cream  
½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated  
¼ cup Romano cheese, grated  
1 ½ cups fresh bread crumbs  
1/3 cup fresh parsley, minced  
1/3 cup fresh basil, minced  
1 tablespoons fresh thyme, minced

In skillet, heat olive oil over medium high heat. Saute onions until softened about 5 minutes. Add garlic and celery and continue cooking another 5 minutes. Remove from heat. In large bowl, combine ground meat,

onion/celery mixture, and remaining ingredients. Mix well. Mold meat into a loaf shape, then place on a foil lined baking sheet that has a rim. . Bake the meat loaf in a preheated 350-degree oven for 1 hour. The internal temperature of the meat loaf should be 160-degrees. Remove from oven and cool for 20-30 minutes before slicing and serving.

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This turkey meatloaf is best when you use plain, ground turkey, as opposed to ground turkey breast.

### Turkey Meatloaf

#### Meatloaf:

2 pounds ground turkey  
2 eggs  
3 ounces tomato paste  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
1/2 cup plain bread crumbs  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 cup chili sauce

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a large mixing bowl, mix together all the ingredients for the meatloaf and work together completely by hand until all ingredients are evenly distributed and the mixture is uniform. Place meat mixture into a 9 by 13-inch baking dish and shape into a loaf about 11 inches long and 4 inches wide. Cover with chili sauce.

Cover pan with aluminum foil. Bake for 45 minutes, then uncover and bake 45 minutes longer. Let rest for 15 minutes before cutting and serving.

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#### Tomato Topping:

1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce  
1 (6-ounce) can tomato paste  
1/4 cup sugar  
2 teaspoons white vinegar or water

2 pounds ground chuck or meat loaf mix with ground pork  
2 eggs  
1/2 cup grated Parmesan  
1/4 cup red onion, diced small  
1/4 cup roasted or fresh red bell peppers, diced  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano  
1/2 teaspoon dried basil  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1/4 pound prosciutto, or any type of ham, thinly sliced  
1/4 pound provolone cheese, sliced

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a small bowl, mix together the tomato topping ingredients. Set aside. Add a few drops of water to thin to a ketchup consistency.

In a large bowl, mix together the beef, eggs, Parmesan, vegetables, herbs, and seasonings.

Working on a waxed paper lined sheet pan or counter, form meatloaf mix into a 10 by 8-inch flat rectangle on the waxed paper. Place a layer of prosciutto slices on top, followed by a layer of provolone slices. Roll up the stuffed meatloaf mix like a burrito and seal the edges all around by pinching the meat.

Place the roll, seam side down, into a 5 by 9-inch loaf pan. Spread a heavy coat of the tomato topping to completely cover the top of the meatloaf. Place in oven and bake for about 1 hour and 15 minutes. Drain fat and let rest at least 10 minutes before slicing.