Slow Cooker Meat Sauce

Recipe for 7-quart slow cooker
Serves: About 12 - 14 (Makes about 2 - 3 quarts)
Cooking Time: 7 – 8 hours on low or 4 – 5 on high

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds meatloaf mix (about a pound and a half of ground chuck and a 1/2 pound of ground pork)
- 1 large chopped onion or 2 small (I use yellow onions)
- 1 medium green pepper, chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic (I use three.)
- ½ cup grated carrot (optional) It does reduce some of the acidity and bitterness of the tomatoes
- 1 (32 ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 (32) ounce can crushed tomatoes

- 1 (32 ounce) can of tomato puree
- 1 (6 ounce) can of tomato paste
- 2 teaspoons salt (You can add or subtract depending on your taste and dietary needs)
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese
- Crushed red pepper flakes to taste. (This is optional. I use about ½ tsp. You can add more or less.)
- 1 Tablespoon dried oregano
- ½ Tablespoon dried basil
- 1 to 2 Tablespoons dried parsley)

Directions:

1. In a large skillet (over medium heat) sauté the vegetables (onion, green pepper, garlic, and carrots) until half cooked (about 5 min). Then add the meat and cook until the meat is still pink, and vegetables are tender. (TIP: I like to slightly undercook the meat. It continues to cook in the slow cooker.) Use a slotted spoon to drain the fat. Then, add the meat and vegetables to the slow cooker.

2. Open all the cans of tomatoes (puree, sauce, paste and crushed) and place them in the slow cooker. Add the rest of the ingredients – except the grated cheese).

3. Cover and cook on low for 7 - 8 hours or 5 - 6 hours on high.

4. During the last hour of cooking, taste test to see if additional spices are needed. This is also the time to add the grated cheese. (The cheese is optional but will act as flavor and thicken the sauce).

5. After the last hour of cooking, use a slotted spoon and remove the bay leaves from the sauce.

6. Serve with your favorite pasta or spiralized vegetable.
- noodles you want.