

Gina's Brodo di Mamma e Polpette – *From Heirloom Kitchen: Heritage Recipes & Family Stories from the Tables of Immigrant Women, by Anna Francese Gass.* Recipe from Anna's mother, Gina Crocco Francese.

For the Sauce (Brodo di Mamma)

Ingredients:

- 5 fresh basil leaves
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and lightly smashed
- 2 teaspoons crushed red pepper (optional)
- 10 ½ cups (three 28-ounce cans) whole San Marzano tomatoes, trimmed and hand crushed
- 3 tablespoons double-concentrated tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon coarse Kosher salt (*Diamond Crystal*)
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

For the Polpette (Meatballs)

Ingredients:

- ½ pound freshly ground pork
- ½ pound freshly ground veal
- ½ pound freshly ground beef (85/15)
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- 1 tablespoon Kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 cup freshly grated Pecorino Romano cheese
- 1 cup breadcrumbs, preferably Italian seasoned (*not Progresso*)
- ½ cup milk
- ½ cup Brodo di Mamma, cooled

Directions For the Brodo (Sauce):

1. Tear the basil leaves into pieces. Combine the torn basil, crushed garlic and olive oil in a small pan and heat over very low heat, allowing the basil and garlic to “steep” in the olive oil for 10 to 15 minutes. The oil will become fragrant and rich with flavor--be careful not to let the garlic burn or go beyond a medium-brown color.
2. Meanwhile combine the hand-crushed tomatoes and 2 cups of water in a large pot. Add the tomato paste, diluted, salt, and pepper. Remove the

infused olive oil from the heat, strain the basil and garlic out, adding the oil to the pot. Stir to combine. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then immediately reduce to a simmer. Remove ½ cup of the brodo for the meatballs, setting it aside to cool.

Directions for the Polpette (meatballs):

1. In a large bowl, hand-mix with open fingers all the ingredients. (This prevents overmixing.) The mixture will be very soft but resist the urge to add more breadcrumbs, this makes a tender, melt in your mouth meatball! Once all the ingredients are just combined, scoop out about ¼ cup, and with wet hands gently roll into balls. Place each meatball on a baking sheet and repeat with remaining mixture, making approximately 16 to 18 meatballs.
2. Carefully place the meatballs into the sauce. If the pot seems to be full, simply shimmy the pot back and forth to make more room. (Do not stir with a spoon—you will break the meatballs.)
3. Simmer the meatballs in the sauce, with the pot partially covered, for an hour or more, or until the interior of a test meatball measures at least 160°F with an instant read thermometer.
4. Cook the dried pasta of your choice, al dente, and toss with some of the sauce. Garnish with additional chopped fresh basil and grated Pecorino Romano.
5. Remove the meatballs to a warm platter when ready to serve, either on the side or as part of a second course.
