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Sam's Meatloaf

There's nothing better than a man who can cook a great meal. Teach a boy to cook and you've saved him from a life of carry-out pizzas, microwaved dinners, and boxed mac and cheese suppers. This recipe comes from my friend Sam who, at eleven years old, already knows his way around the business end of a chef's knife. He created this meatloaf, packed with two meats and lots of garlic, to be hearty and flavorful. It's delicious for dinner and makes great cold sandwiches the next day.

2 tablespoons butter
1 cup half-inch diced white or yellow onion
8 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
One pound ground pork
One pound ground round
1 cup Panko or fresh bread crumbs
2 eggs
Salt
Pepper
Worcestershire (about 5 shakes)
Bufalo brand Chipotle Hot Sauce or your favorite brand of hot sauce (four shakes)

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. If you are using a preheated baking sheet for this, place the stone in the cold oven to preheat it.

In a large skillet over medium high heat, heat the butter until it just begins to foam, add the onions and garlic.

Sauté the onions and garlic until they are translucent but not browned. Turn off the heat and allow the onion/garlic mixture to cool to room temperature.

Put the pork and beef in a large mixing bowl and mix the meat gently by hand so it doesn't compact.

Add the bread crumbs, eggs, onions and garlic mixture to the meat. Gently mix with your hands to combine.

Add salt and pepper (see Notes below), Worcestershire, and hot sauce. Mix gently with hands to combine.

Put the meat mixture in a plastic wrap lined meatloaf pan (4.5 inches wide by 8.5 inches long by 3 inches deep), then turn it out onto a preheated stone baking sheet (see Notes below).

Remove the plastic wrap and pat it down to remove any air bubbles which may cause the meatloaf to crack while baking. *Make sure it's shaped so that when it's done, the leftovers will fit two slices to a piece of bread for sammiches--Sam's words, not mine.*

Bake for 30 minutes or until the meatloaf reaches an internal temperature of 160 degrees.

Remove the meatloaf from the oven and let it rest for 10 minutes before slicing.

Makes 6 servings.

NOTES: Sam has an unusual and very effective technique for adding salt and pepper to the meatloaf. He suggests flattening the meatloaf mixture on a cutting board until it is about an inch thick and then adding the salt and pepper as if you were seasoning it on your plate. He says it guarantees a perfectly seasoned meatloaf every time.

This meatloaf can be baked in a metal meatloaf pan rather than on a baking sheet. Just use the same sized pan as noted in the recipe, omit the plastic wrap, and bake it for 50-60 minutes or until the meatloaf reaches an internal temperature of 160 degrees.

If you want an interesting alternative to the sautéed garlic in the recipe, Sam suggests using 8-10 cloves of roasted garlic in place of the sliced garlic. He puts the whole roasted cloves in the meat mixture after he adds the sautéed onions. Sometimes he serves the roasted garlic on the side so that people can spread the garlic on the sliced meatloaf.

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