

Sicilian Meatloaf

Jim Laird | Raymond, Ohio

“Back in the 1970s, I was just learning how to cook. Mom’s cooking was great—with the exception of her meatloaf. So, I went looking for another way to make a meatloaf and found out how at a friend’s grandma’s house.” The recipe Jim found layers ham and cheese over a meatloaf mixture, which is rolled into a log, jelly-roll style. It’s an adaptation of an old Italian recipe, the Sicilian meatloaf falso magro, made by taking a thin slice of meat and wrapping it around ground meat and other fillings, like prosciutto, cheese, and even hard-boiled eggs. Jim opts for a meat-cheese filling that gives each slice of this meatloaf great flavor, texture, and visual appeal.

Serves 4

Glaze

- 2 large tomatoes, cored and quartered
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup lightly packed basil leaves
- 2 tablespoons hot sauce

Meatloaf

- 12 ounces 85 percent lean ground beef
- 6 ounces sweet Italian sausage, casings removed
- 1 cup tomato juice
- 17 saltine crackers, crushed
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh oregano
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- Salt and pepper
- 4 thin slices ham
- 4 thin slices mozzarella or Swiss cheese

1. For the glaze: Process the glaze ingredients together in a food processor until smooth, about 1 minute. Transfer the mixture to a small saucepan and cook over medium-high heat until thickened, about 20 minutes.
2. For the meatloaf: Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees.
3. Combine the beef, sausage, tomato juice, crackers, parsley, oregano, garlic, egg, 3/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper in a bowl and mix with your hands until evenly blended and the meat mixture does not stick to the bowl.
4. Following the photo on page 77, lay a sheet of foil perpendicularly over another sheet of foil to make a cross. Spread the meat mixture over the bottom portion of the top piece of foil to make a 10 by 7 1/2-inch rectangle. Layer the ham and cheese evenly over the meat, leaving a 1/2-inch border around the bottom and sides and a 1-inch border along the top. Roll the meat and filling into a compact log. Transfer the loaf to an 8 1/2 by 4 1/2-inch loaf pan (still in the foil). Fold back any excess foil.
5. Spread the glaze evenly over the meatloaf and bake until the center registers 160 degrees on an instant-read thermometer, 1 hour to 1 hour 25 minutes. Cool for 15 minutes. Remove the roll from the pan using the foil sling and serve.