

Perfectly Scrappy Meatloaf

Yield: 10 servings

Scraps used: Stale bread, onion trim, carrot peels and bruised tomatoes.

Why: Vegetable trimmings are the most common kitchen scrap for anyone who cooks dinner, even a few nights a week. These bits that are usually thrown away, even though they are just as nutritious and flavorful as the parts that are more commonly used. When they're ground up and mixed in a meatloaf, they add moisture and flavor. Meatloaf is also a great place to put less-than-fresh bread. It actually works better than fresh bread since its dry thirsty crumbs suck up the juices from the meat, holding on to every flavorful drop.

The Salt: Morton® Fine Sea Salt disperses its flavor very evenly. In this meatloaf, it permeates through the meat mixture, flavoring every bite. Using sea salt adds a briny nuance that takes the flavor up a notch.

Ingredients:

3 slices stale bread, broken in small pieces

1 cup milk, any type or fat percentage

Trim from 4 onions (ends, skin, dry or discolored outer layers), or 1 whole medium onion (peel, ends, everything), coarsely chopped (about 2 packed cups)

Peels from 3 washed carrots or 1 large washed unpeeled carrot, chopped (about 1 packed cup)

1 very ripe, bruised tomato or a perfectly-ripe tomato, coarsely chopped

2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

1 tablespoon brown spicy mustard

2 teaspoons Morton® Fine Sea Salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

2 large eggs

3 pounds meatloaf mix (1½ pounds ground beef, ¾ pound ground pork, ¼ pound ground veal or ground dark-meat turkey or chicken)

Directions:

Preheat the oven: Turn the oven to 375°F.

Soak the bread: Put the stale bread and the milk in a bowl and whoosh around so that all the bread is moistened. Set aside until the bread gets soft.

Blend the other ingredients: While that's going on, blend the onion trim, carrot peels, tomato, Worcestershire, mustard, salt, pepper and eggs in a high-speed blender until everything is smooth. Scrape in the softened bread and blend until the mixture is completely smooth.

Mix and form the loaf: Put the meat in the bowl that you used to soak the bread and mush it with your hands to mix the three types of meat together. Pour the blended mix into the meat and mix everything together with your hands (the most versatile set of tools you own). The mix will be very wet; let it sit for 10 minutes or so to firm up. Scrape onto a sheet pan and form into a mounded loaf.

Bake: Bake until browned and an instant-read meat thermometer inserted in the center says at least 160°F, about 1 hour.

Serve: Let it sit for 10 minutes before slicing and serving. Slice and serve.

Notes:

If you can't find meatloaf mix at your market, you can make your own by combining ground beef, ground dark meat turkey and breakfast pork sausage meat.

If you don't have ripe tomatoes or it's the middle of winter, you can substitute ¼ cup ketchup.

I know this meatloaf is large. It's meant to deliver enough leftovers for tomorrow's sandwiches (fresh rye bread and a squirt of ketchup), or serve it sliced with mustard and pickles, like the way they serve paté in a trendy bistro.