

American Chop Suey 🍅

American Chop Suey—a true New England classic! It's that comforting, no-frills dish that's been a staple in homes and diners for generations. The mix of elbow macaroni (or another pasta), seasoned ground beef, sautéed onions and peppers, and a rich tomato sauce just hits the spot every time.

Some folks might confuse it with goulash or Johnny Marzetti, but in New England, this is American Chop Suey—no deep-fried noodles or Asian influence, just straight-up, hearty, home-cooked goodness. This one pot meal is sure to satisfy. And yes, a slice of buttered fresh bread on the side is a *must*! 🍞🍲😊

Ingredients

- 1 lb elbow macaroni (or small pasta of choice such as orecchiette)
- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 1 red or green bell pepper, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 (28 oz) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 (15 oz) can tomato sauce
- 1 (14.5 oz) can diced tomatoes (optional, for extra texture)
- 3 oz tomato paste (for richness)
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tbsp Italian seasoning (or a mix of oregano, basil, and thyme)
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes (optional, for a little heat)
- Kosher or sea salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp sugar (optional, to balance acidity)

Instructions

1. Cook the Pasta:

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the macaroni until al dente. Drain and set aside.

2. Brown the Beef:

1. In a large skillet or pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat.
2. Add the ground beef and cook until just browned (still some pink in ground beef), breaking it up with a spoon. Drain excess fat if necessary.

3. Sauté the Veggies:

1. Add the diced onion, bell pepper, garlic, Worcestershire sauce, Italian seasoning, red pepper flakes, salt, pepper, and sugar (if using) to the beef. Sauté until beef is browned and onions are translucent, about 5-10 minutes.

4. Make the Sauce:

1. Stir in the tomato paste, crushed tomatoes, tomato sauce, and diced tomatoes (if using).
2. Simmer on low heat for about 30-45 minutes, stirring occasionally.

5. Combine & Serve:

1. Stir in the cooked pasta, making sure everything is well coated. Let it sit for a few minutes to absorb the flavors.
2. Serve hot with fresh buttered bread on the side

💡 Optional Additions:

Swapping out half of the ground beef for **ground pork, veal, Italian sausage, or even venison** brings a whole new depth of flavor to American Chop Suey. Each variation gives the dish its own unique twist:

- **Ground Pork** – Adds a little more fat and sweetness, making the sauce even richer.
- **Ground Veal** – Creates a tender, milder flavor that blends beautifully with the tomato sauce.
- **Italian Sausage (mild or spicy)** – Infuses the dish with bold, savory spices and a little heat if using spicy sausage.
- **Venison** – A lean, gamey option that pairs well with the bold tomato flavors (great for hunters!).

Want to take it up another notch? Try **adding a splash of red wine** while sautéing the meat for extra depth, or finish with a sprinkle of shredded mozzarella or Parmesan for a cheesy touch.

New England comfort food, but *your way*! 🍲🔥