

ket. But at the same time, I like Hellman's mayonnaise better than Miracle Whip.

With my own kids, I began using Hellman's in the recipe. The sweet relish became freshly-chopped sweet gherkins with the juices intact. To kick the flavor up a bit I added a little freshly-chopped Spanish onion. And finally, I found I liked some good yellow mustard in there along with some Kosher salt. I posted my recipe online in 2005.

Just prior to the 2008/09 New Years, Katie Nehring herself told me a story. The story had me curious enough to head to Oliver T's, a popular upscale gourmet deli in my hometown of Grand Blanc. It turns out deli specialist Brian Converso had grown up around the corner from Nehring's Market and had always enjoyed the same Nehring's Homemade Sandwich Spread I'd always enjoyed. Brian had decided he wanted to make a similar spread at Oliver T's. While looking for a recipe online, Oliver T's Deli & Catering Manager Lorna Shaheen found my version of Ralph's recipe, complete with the story of how it was inspired by Ralph's version. Brian made up a sample batch for in-store tasting, which he tells me was rather well received.

Oliver T's is the sole licensee for this Ground Bologna Sandwich Spread. Well alright, I guess if they want to, Nehring's Market can offer it at their store as well. I have serious doubts they'll want to though ...

Nehring's Market

3517 S. Belsay Rd, Burton, Michigan 48519
810.742.6898

Oliver T's Market

1553 E. Hill Road, Grand Blanc, MI 48439
810.695.6550
www.oliverts.com

In this recipe I included a step about skinning the ring bologna before grinding it. At the same time, the hot dogs in natural casings for my Almost Flint-Style Coney Sauce don't get skinned before being sent through the same grinder. Shortly after finishing this version of this recipe for the sandwich spread, I made a batch for Mary and I ... while only glancing at the recipe for ingredient amounts. While grinding the ring bologna, I noticed the ground bologna seemed to stay inside of the grinder more than usual. I thought maybe the disks on the front of the grinder were simply stuffed so, using a butter knife, I dug all the meat out of the disassembled grinder, then finished the batch of sandwich spread.

The following day after eating sandwiches made from this batch for lunch, we had a good laugh (more Mary than myself as it was at my expense!) over having to dig large pieces of ring bologna skin from each bite of our sandwiches.

Make all kinds of good stuff, and to enhance your reputation in the kitchen, make sure you can repeat it. And you can also be sure that I will skin the ring bologna for the Ground Bologna Sandwich Spread from now on.



A bin of Ralph Nehring's original version in the kitchen at Nehring's Market, Burton, Michigan.

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Luna Pier Cook

Recipe for Ground Bologna Sandwich Spread



The Story of This Version of The Recipe

Dave Liske, Luna Pier, Michigan, January 2009



One place I've always loved going to is Nehring's Market, on the corner of Belsay and Bristol Roads in Burton, Michigan. Carl and Beulah Nehring first opened the market in 1960, with their son Ralph and his wife Linda taking over in 1970. In-between that time Ralph and Linda became my youngest sister's Godparents and have remained friends with us ever since. Ralph and Linda still run the market, and their daughter Katie became a partner in 2006.

A favorite deli item of ours has always been Ralph's own Nehring's Homemade Sandwich Spread. This simple combination of ground Koegel-brand bologna, Miracle Whip and sweet relish has been in countless sandwiches and numerous Saturday and Sunday meals at my parents' house.

Somewhere down the line, we think mom's recipe, and what the Nehring's crew offers in the store crossed paths and are, in fact, of the same lineage.

Mom taught me how to make what has always tasted like Nehring's Homemade Sandwich Spread and I made it with her for a lot of years. Later I started teaching my own kids how to make it exactly the way mom had taught me so many years before.

Even though I grew up eating Nehring's Homemade Sandwich Spread, there's a personal taste involved in making it. I'll certainly buy Ralph's version whenever I can. When mom makes it at her house she generally has me take over at some point and I'll finish it exactly the way it's made at Nehring's Mar-

Luna Pier Cook's Ground Bologna Sandwich Spread

Dave Liske, Luna Pier Michigan, January 2009

Ingredients

1-1/2 lbs ring bologna
2 - 3 Baby sweet pickles
3 1/8" slices from 1 medium-size Spanish onion
1 cup mayonnaise
2 tsp yellow prepared mustard
Kosher salt
1 loaf white bread

Equipment

1 meat grinder
1 8" x 8" glass dish
1 large mixing bowl
1 2-quart storage container with lid



Remove any strings or clips off the ends of the ring bologna. Cut the bologna into 4 sections for easier handling. Slit one side of each section lengthwise and remove the casing. Install discs onto the front of the meat grinder for a fairly small grind and grind the ring bologna into the glass dish. After digging the rest of the bologna out of the grinder, dump the bologna into the mixing bowl.

Finely-chop the sweet pickles till you have about 1/2 cup, and then do the same with the slices of onion. Add the chopped pickle and onion to the bologna in the mixing bowl, then add the mayonnaise and mustard and mix it all together till it's smooth. Taste it, adding some salt to punch up the flavor if necessary.

Transfer the spread to the storage bowl and refrigerate it until it's ice cold. Use a fork to put a layer of spread about 3/8" thick on a slice of white bread, then close with another slice. Serve with kettle-cooked potato chips or steaming-hot French fries.

This lunchtime and picnic favorite is available by the pound in just about every deli and butcher shop in the midwest. It's simple to make: kids absolutely love helping grind the ring bologna in the meat grinder.

- A lot of this doesn't actually need to be measured. This is one recipe you can make ingredient-by-ingredient, tasting as you go, creating your own flavor, using different brands and various flavors of each of the ingredients. For example, Brian Converso of Oliver T's Market leaves the salt out simply because he uses a slightly hotter breed of mustard. Changes can really be that simple.
- Koegel original-flavor ring bologna is the preferred choice. The garlic or pickled varieties also make for an interesting flavor. Other brands from other "real" meat suppliers throughout the state will taste good, just not quite the same.
- While it's possible to grind the ring bologna in a food processor, a better texture is created using an old-fashioned hand-driven meat grinder. These are available in specialty and antique shops, commercial food equipment dealers, and the cooking section of Cabela's in Dundee.
- Both my mom and the staff at Nehring's Market use Miracle Whip salad dressing instead of the mayonnaise. Mom also grinds the pickles and onions through the grinder instead of chopping them separately. To me, grinding the pickles and onions also squeezes their juices into the ground bologna, which adds an interesting touch to the already tangy flavor of the Miracle Whip dressing.