HEARTY VEGAN SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE
lightly adapted from rainbowplantlife.com

Yield: ~5 servings
Prep Time: ~ 10 minutes
Cook Time: ~35 minutes
Storage: refrigerate up to 3 - 4 days

Ingredients
2 tablespoons avocado oil
1 large onion, diced
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon EACH of: dried basil, dried oregano, and dried thyme
1 1/2 teaspoons sea salt + 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper, or to taste
1 6-oz can of tomato paste
3 cups vegetable broth
1 14.5-oz can of crushed or diced tomatoes
1 cup red lentils, picked over for stones, rinsed well, and drained
1/4 cup walnuts, very finely chopped
1 tablespoon aged balsamic vinegar - see note*
12 oz cooked whole-grain or gluten-free pasta (zucchini noodles would work too)
Optional: vegan parmesan cheese as garnish

*A balsamic vinegar aged for 3+ years is recommended - the aging process creates a naturally sweeter taste. If you don’t have this ingredient, just substitute with 1 teaspoon coconut sugar or maple syrup.

Directions
1. Preheat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Then add the avocado oil, followed by the onions. Sauté the onions until softened and golden brown, about 9-10 minutes. Add a couple spoonfuls of water to deglaze the pan if you see any signs of burning.
2. Add the garlic, basil, oregano, thyme, salt, and pepper. Stir and cook for another minute to help heat up the spices and make them fragrant.
3. Stir in the tomato paste and cook for 2-3 minutes to caramelize, stirring often to prevent burning, until it deepens into a darker red.
4. Add the broth to deglaze the pan, stirring any browned bits off the bottom of the pan.
5. Add the tomatoes, lentils, and walnuts, and stir to incorporate. Heat until the mixture comes to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low to maintain a rapid simmer for about 20 minutes, or until the lentils are tender, but not complete mush. Stir occasionally to prevent burning and sticking. If using crushed tomatoes, you may need to add a little water as you go along to prevent burning. Lower the heat, if needed.
6. Taste the sauce and adjust for seasonings. Finish with balsamic vinegar or sugar, and stir to combine. Serve over your favorite type of noodles and garnish with vegan parmesan cheese.