

# BASIC MARINARA SAUCE

Makes a large pot

By Dennis W. Viau; modified from my mother's recipe.

There are countless recipes for this standard Italian pasta sauce. This is the basic sauce I make, based on my mother's recipe. Both her parents were Italian immigrants and although my mother's cooking was, at times, risky, she made an excellent spaghetti sauce. There are likely many Italian cooks who would argue that their marinara sauce is the *true* Italian marinara sauce, but feel free to make variations according to your preferences. Creativity is one of the joys of cooking. One requisite: Try to find imported Italian San Marzano tomatoes for an authentic flavor. The flavor really is the best.



The following ingredients make a large pot of sauce. If you don't want to use a #10 can of tomatoes, buy the smaller cans sold in the grocery store and adjust the amount of other ingredients accordingly.

## Ingredients:

3 large cans (28 oz./793g to 35 oz./992g each) or 1 #10 can (90 oz./2.55kg) San Marzano tomatoes  
1 cup packed fresh basil; stems removed  
½ cup packed fresh Italian parsley; stems removed  
6 to 8 cloves garlic; whole  
1 medium onion; chopped and caramelized (see below)\*  
1 6-ounce (170g) can tomato paste  
1 tablespoon dry oregano flakes  
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)  
½ tablespoon salt

## Directions:

To caramelize the chopped onion, place it in a large cooking pot over medium heat with a little olive oil (about 2 tablespoons) and sauté, stirring often, until a golden brown, about 10 to 20 minutes.

Place some of the tomatoes, basil, parsley, garlic, and caramelized onion in a blender and blend for 6 to 8 seconds. Pour into the cooking pot. Continue until all the ingredients are blended. Place the pan over medium-high heat. Add the tomato paste and oregano and stir to blend. For a spicier sauce, add the optional red pepper flakes.

Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer, partially covered, for about 1½ hours, stirring often.

Use in your favorite recipe.

This sauce can be made a day or two in advance—in fact, the flavor improves if stored overnight in the refrigerator. Allow to cool before storing. It also freezes well.

\* Rather than adding sugar to my sauce (many people do) I caramelize the onion, which concentrates the sugar in the onion. Not only does this add a little sweetness, it also adds more complexity to the flavor.

The step-by-step photos were removed. See the video for the preparation.