

# Marinara Sauce

A good tomato sauce is delicious by itself, and also forms the base from which many delightful variations can be created. It is quick and easy to make. Many people do not want to bother making their own because they think the sauce needs to cook for hours. On the contrary, if you cook it for hours you lose the bright, zesty tomato flavors.

There are just a few simple keys to making a great sauce. First is to use high quality tomatoes. Good quality canned tomatoes are fine. Actually they are preferred by many chefs. Once a year or so, I like to make a sauce from fresh tomatoes when they are in peak season. The remainder of the time I use canned Italian Tomatoes.

In preparing for this cookbook, we tested sixteen brands of Crushed Tomatoes. We were looking for the optimum quality so the recipes in this book would be as good as we prepare in the restaurant. Please see page 15 for our recommendations.

8 servings

2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 small (or 1/2 large) onion—finely chopped  
3-4 cloves fresh garlic—pressed or minced  
2 - 28 oz. cans Crushed Tomatoes  
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano  
1 teaspoon fresh Italian Parsley—chopped (or 1/2 teaspoon dried)  
1 tablespoon fresh Basil—kissed by the sun—julienned  
1/2 teaspoon salt (preferably sea salt)  
1/2 teaspoon sugar (or more to your taste)  
1 tablespoon tomato paste  
drizzle extra virgin olive oil

1. Mise en Place—prepare and measure out all ingredients in advance.
2. Drizzle Pure Olive Oil in a large, straight sided skillet (or sauce pan—3 qt. or larger), and heat over medium heat until oil begins to shimmer. Sauté onion until translucent. Add garlic and sauté for 1 to 2 additional minutes (do not burn the garlic!).
3. Add Crushed Tomatoes. Add herbs, salt, sugar and tomato paste. Check seasoning and adjust to your taste. Reduce heat to a simmer. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and stir in.
4. Unless you are preparing the sauce in advance, heat water for pasta; 3-4 quarts with teaspoon of salt in a large pot. Bring to a boil.
5. Cook 1-1/2 pounds pasta of your choice until al dente.
6. Drain pasta. Do not rinse. Toss with sauce and serve with grated parmesan Cheese. I highly recommend Parmigiano-Reggiano!



## Suggested Wine: *Valpolicella*

In Veneto, they produce a wine called Valpolicella, made from the little known indigenous grapes Corvina, Rondinella, and Molinara. The wine is generally light-bodied, velvety, and very aromatic with soft tannins. It has flavors of cherry or berry fruits and a good acidity and zestiness which goes perfectly with Marinara.

**Frankie's recommendation:** *Allegrini Valpolicella Classico*



## Frankie's Tips:

- ◆ You could easily cut this recipe in half, if you are cooking for a small crowd. But since the sauce freezes so well, I recommend you make the full recipe and freeze the remaining sauce for another meal.
- ◆ If you don't want to work with fresh garlic cloves, feel free to substitute minced garlic which comes in a jar. Substitute 1/2 teaspoon for each clove.
- ◆ For the best quality sauce, check out my canned tomato recommendations on page 15.
- ◆ This recipe calls for Crushed Tomatoes. If you like your sauce to have a chunkier consistency, use one can of Crushed and one can of Whole Peeled Tomatoes. You will have to break up the whole tomatoes, and cook it a little longer (or add additional tomato paste) to compensate for the additional liquid.
- ◆ Many people like to add wine to their tomato sauces. If you do, I recommend white wine, which will give you a brighter flavor and color. I would suggest 1/4 cup added just before the tomatoes.