

Classic Marinara Sauce

Recipe from Lidia Bastianich

Adapted by Julia Moskin

Time 25 minutes

Rating ★★★★★ (7759)

Homemade marinara is almost as fast and tastes immeasurably better than even the best supermarket sauce — and it's made with basic pantry ingredients. All the tricks to a bright red, lively-tasting sauce, made just as it is in the south of Italy (no butter, no onions) are in this recipe. Use a skillet instead of the usual saucepan: the water evaporates quickly, so the tomatoes are just cooked through as the sauce becomes thick. (Our colleagues over at Wirecutter have spent a lot of time testing skillets to find the best on the market. If you're looking to purchase one, check out their skillet guide (<https://thewirecutter.com/reviews/the-best-skillet/>).) —**Julia Moskin**

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 3½ cups, enough for 1 pound of pasta

1 28-ounce can whole San Marzano tomatoes, certified D.O.P. if possible

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

7 garlic cloves, peeled and slivered

Small dried whole chile, or pinch crushed red pepper flakes

1 teaspoon kosher salt

PREPARATION

Step 1

Pour tomatoes into a large bowl and crush with your hands. Pour 1 cup water into can and slosh it around to get tomato juices. Reserve.

Step 2

In a large skillet (do not use a deep pot) over medium heat, heat the oil. When it is hot, add garlic.

Step 3

As soon as garlic is sizzling (do not let it brown), add the tomatoes, then the reserved tomato water. Add whole chile or red pepper flakes, oregano (if using) and salt. Stir.

1 large fresh basil sprig, or ¼
teaspoon dried oregano, more
to taste

Step 4

Place basil sprig, including stem, on the surface (like a flower). Let it wilt, then submerge in sauce. Simmer sauce until thickened and oil on surface is a deep orange, about 15 minutes. (If using oregano, taste sauce after 10 minutes of simmering, adding more salt and oregano as needed.) Discard basil and chile (if using).

Private Notes

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