

## Authentic (Quick) Italian Tomato Sauce for Pasta

October 23rd, 2013 | 198 comments

*This authentic Italian tomato sauce is so quick, and easy to make that it's ready before the pasta is finished cooking! Read the reviews; when you make this once, you'll never go back to those inauthentic, sugar-filled jar sauces. Buon appetito!*



*NOTE: if you like a smooth sauce (no bits of tomato or skin, etc.), just puree the tomatoes or use puree. Make it exactly the same way.*

As promised, here is my own “how to make tomato sauce” post. This is continued from my last rant ([here](#)) where I dissected BuzzFeed’s attempt to write a recipe for making “the best” tomato sauce, explaining why it was all wrong.

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Actually, this is not “my” recipe—this is a basic recipe that millions of Italians have used for ages to make one type of Italian pasta sauce. It’s the equivalent to posting a recipe for a basic hamburger in the US; it’s not an actual copyrighted recipe, and of course there are variations, but almost everyone knows how to make a hamburger. However, many Americans ask...

### *How do you Make Fresh Tomato Sauce for Pasta?*

It’s not difficult at all, and you’ll be so happy with the results (just read the reviews below).

This is a super quick Italian pasta sauce recipe, or sugo, which is actually ready by the time the pasta is done (usually it’s ready before then). I made a chunky tomato sauce, but you can make a smooth sauce with puréed tomatoes, which I often use.

You may also like to make [homemade gnocchi](#) and serve it with this sauce.



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### Meet Christina



A Scottish Italian cook living in Los Angeles, Christina is usually cooking, baking or (c)reating something scrumptious. When she isn't in the kitchen, she loves to travel, near and far, as long as good food is involved.



Christina is on a mission to save authentic Italian dishes from extinction, and is constantly promoting Scottish (and British) food as some of the best cuisine the world has to offer—one steak pie and sticky toffee pudding at a time.



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CAVEAT: If you substitute any of the ingredients which I list, or alter any of the directions, you must realize that you will not have the same outcome, or the same flavor as the sauce that I make.

Once, I gave a friend a recipe with instructions on which specific ingredients to use. The friend made the recipe and then told me, "It didn't taste as good as yours." After a brief investigation, I realized that she had substituted inferior quality ingredients. If you want the best results, use the best ingredients!

## Perfect Plum Muffins

 Perfect Plum Muffins



**UPDATED July 7, 2016:** eating authentic Italian pasta as part of the Mediterranean diet, can actually aid in weight loss according to a [recent study](#).



## How to Check Whether Your Canned/Jar/Box Tomatoes are Good Quality.

Want a tip on testing if your choice of canned tomatoes are top quality? First, read the label: tomatoes from Italy are *usually* very good, but do check the ingredients. You do not want anything added other than tomatoes, salt, basil or citric acid.

The best product is just tomatoes (I prefer the ones from a glass jar). I've also seen news stories where tomatoes were brought from China, then canned in Italy so they could say "made in Italy". They added color and all sorts of nasty things, so don't just rely on the label.

**UPATE (Oct. 2019)** I am now collaborating with a campaign called [The Greatest Tomatoes From Europe](#), with [ANICAV](#).

**GREATEST TOMATOES FROM EUROPE**

THE ART OF PERFECTION. PRESERVED FOR ALL TASTES.



Once you decide to purchase said tomatoes, here's the second test: open the can/jar/carton and dip your fingertip into the tomatoes or puree. Does it taste good? If you made a sour face, they're probably not going to make a great sauce. If the answer is "Yes, they're sweet and tasty!" then you've found the right tomatoes!



## *Authentic (Quick) Italian Tomato Sauce for Pasta (Spaghetti Sauce)*

### Ingredients

- 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil (like [Lucini](#))
- 4 or 5 cloves *fresh* garlic (not in a jar, dried, powdered, or frozen) preferably grown in USA
- small bunch of *fresh* Italian parsley, finely chopped (my family likes to use parsley in sugo)
- 1 (28-32 oz) carton/jar of chopped tomatoes or puree (like [Mutti](#), or [Bionaturae](#)) any tomatoes listed on the [Greatest Tomatoes from Europe](#) site will be fantastic
- about 1 1/2 level tsp Diamond Crystal [Kosher](#) or sea salt
- 3 or 4 large leaves of *fresh* basil
- [Parmigiano Reggiano](#) to grate

To enjoy with pasta as soon as the sauce is ready, put a large pot of salted water on the cooktop over high heat and cook the pasta (I prefer De Cecco) as directed (if you are using egg or a very quick cooking pasta, do this about half-way through these directions).

Pour the oil into a [large sauté pan](#) (not a deep pot) over medium high heat. Crush the garlic and add it to the oil (if you want a spicy sauce, you can add some hot pepper, fresh or flakes, at this point). Sauté the garlic until it just starts to brown, then add the parsley.



Turn the heat up to high. Now, add the quality puree (passata) or chopped tomatoes, and quickly cover with the lid for about 30 seconds, until the squirting subsides. Stir with a wooden spoon and lower the heat a little. It is important that this sauce is cooked at a fast

simmer, as it is cooked briefly.



Add the salt and continue to simmer at a fast pace, and stir often, WITHOUT THE LID.

The sauce will thicken quickly, so do not overcook it, and have it become too thick; about 5 to 7 minutes should be sufficient.



Taste the sauce, if it doesn't taste delicious, it probably just needs a little more salt. Turn off the heat and add the fresh basil (I tear mine into pieces). Also, unless absolutely necessary, do not wash your basil. Wipe it with a damp paper towel instead, so the water doesn't ruin the flavor and aroma of the basil.



Add your authentic Italian tomato sauce to the drained pasta in the same pot. Save some pasta water to add back into the pasta in case it's too dry. Top with some freshly grated authentic Parmigiano Reggiano cheese or Pecorino Romano, and freshly ground black pepper. You now have an authentic Italian tomato sauce to use as you please!

Also, if you've been plating pasta in a bowl, then topping it with sauce, this is American-style. It honestly doesn't taste as good if served this way. (If you don't believe me, try it both ways, side by side.)

If you want to serve it the way they do in Italy, mix the sauce in with the pasta and *then* plate it. Domenica Marchetti, who is an authority on Italian cuisine and the author of six Italian cookbooks [explains this on her site](#), also. She also shares a simple Italian tomato sauce recipe which is almost identical to this recipe.

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YIELD: FOR 1 LB OF PASTA

## Authentic (Quick) Italian Tomato Sauce for Pasta



4.6 Stars (100 Reviews)

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### PREP TIME

5 minutes

### COOK TIME

10 minutes

### TOTAL TIME

15 minutes

## Ingredients

- 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil (like De Cecco or Lucini)
- 4 or 5 cloves fresh garlic (not in a jar, dried, powdered, or frozen) preferably grown in USA
- small bunch of fresh Italian parsley, finely chopped (my family likes to use parsley in sugo)
- 1 (28-32 oz) carton/jar of chopped tomatoes or puree (like De Cecco, Mutti, or Bionaturae- I no longer like POMI since their quality dropped) ultimately, fresh Roma tomatoes are best if you have them
- about 1 1/2 level tsp Kosher salt
- 3 or 4 large leaves of fresh basil

## Instructions

1. Pour the oil into a large saute pan (not a deep pot) over medium high heat. Crush the garlic and add it to the oil (if you want a spicy sauce, you can add some hot pepper, fresh or flakes, at this point). Saute the garlic until it just starts to brown, then add the parsley.
2. Turn the heat up to high. Now add the tomatoes, and quickly cover with the lid for about 30 seconds, until the squirting subsides. Stir with a wooden spoon and lower the heat a little. It is important that this sauce is cooked at a fast simmer, as it is cooked briefly.
3. Add the salt and continue to simmer at a fast pace, and stir often.
4. The sauce will thicken quickly, so do not overcook it, and have it become too thick; about 5 to 7 minutes should be sufficient.
5. Taste the sauce, if it doesn't taste delicious, it probably just needs a little more salt. Turn off the heat and add the fresh basil (I tear mine into pieces). Also, unless absolutely necessary, do not wash your basil. Wipe it with a damp paper towel instead, so the water doesn't ruin the flavor and aroma.
6. Add sauce to the drained pasta (save some pasta water to add back into the pasta in case it's too dry), and enjoy immediately with some freshly grated authentic Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and/or pepper.
7. Also, if you've been plating pasta in a bowl, then topping it with sauce, this is American-style. If you want to serve it the way they do in Italy, mix the sauce in and then plate it.

Nutrition Information: YIELD: 6 SERVING SIZE: 4 oz

Amount Per Serving: CALORIES: 125 SATURATED FAT: 10g CHOLESTEROL: 0mg SODIUM: 0mg

CARBOHYDRATES: 7g FIBER: 0g SUGAR: 0g PROTEIN: 0g



You can't get a simpler, better tasting Italian tomato sauce!

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## 198 Responses

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**Khyati says:**

December 7, 2019 at 9:53 am

Hii

I have tried so many different Tomato Sauce at home but I can't make it same as restaurant. I used to buy POMI but only sometimes. I like to use always fresh tomatoes. I will try tomorrow to make same pasta sauce recipe what you gave. But if I will use fresh tomatoes how much time I have to cook for. Can you please explain me with fresh tomatoes ( ready made sauce is quick makes in 5-7 mins) will takes time.  
Thanks.

REPLY

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**Christina says:**

December 7, 2019 at 10:01 am

Do it exactly as stated in the recipe, but just add chopped tomatoes instead of the can/bottle, Khyati. Enjoy!

REPLY

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**Liz says:**

November 18, 2019 at 3:22 pm

Part of sharing recipes is letting folks amend them a bit – so don't get angry when people modify. This base is incredible, however! I did add a splash of red wine to the sauce which deepened the flavors. I used Cento crushed tomatoes because the season isn't right for fresh and it is a very good sauce!! Will try again next summer (okay I will make it again many times before that with high quality tomatoes), when fresh tomatoes are in season! Brava. Nicely done!

REPLY

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**Christina says:**

November 18, 2019 at 4:27 pm

I absolutely have no issue with anyone amending as they wish, but to post a ridiculous recipe is another story. Glad you liked the sauce, and yes, Cento will give you great results! Brava to you, too!! :)

REPLY