

Dan Ralston's Kitchen

My Fire Department Marinara Sauce

Serves; 56 (6 oz. each)

- 1 1/2 cup olive oil
- 6 small yellow onions, finely chopped
- 6 stalks celery, finely chopped
- 5-6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 6 - 28 oz. can crushed tomatoes (Contadina or S&W)*
- 6 - 14 1/2 oz. can ready cut tomatoes (Contadina or S&W)*
- 6 - 6 oz. can Contadina Tomato Paste
- 6 cups hearty red wine
- 6 Tbs. Balsamic vinegar
- 3 tsps. Sugar (approx.)
- 6 tsp. mixed Italian dried herbs, or to taste
- 6 bay leaf
- 1 tsp. crushed red pepper
- Salt and pepper to taste

I use this basic sauce for the College Township Fire Department Christmas party. I actually make 2 batches of this sauce in separate roasters; one with ground beef. I sauté 7 pounds of ground beef in a separate pan in olive oil until the pink is just gone then add milk to cover and simmer until the milk has evaporated. Then I add white wine and a tsp. of nutmeg and salt and pepper and simmer until the wine has evaporated. Add the beef to one of the roasters. The sauce is even better after having been frozen.

In a large pan or roaster heat the olive oil until hot but not smoking. Add the chopped vegetables and sauté, stirring constantly, until the vegetables are soft and the onion is transparent. Adjust the heat to medium as you sauté the vegetables. Add all the other ingredients in the order listed and stir until thoroughly mixed and starting to bubble. Reduce the heat to very low and partially cover. Your sauce should just barely simmer, with an occasional bubble, for 2 1/2 to 3 hours. Stir it occasionally and adjust your seasonings to your taste-especially the sugar, salt and pepper.

*A note on ingredients...don't use tomato sauce instead of the tomatoes, you will end up with a salty and bitter mess if you do.