

## Dan Ralston's Kitchen

### My Marinara Sauce

Serves Variable

1/4 cup olive oil  
1 small yellow onion, finely chopped  
1 stalk celery, finely chopped  
2-3 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
1 - 28 oz. can crushed tomatoes (Contadina or S&W)  
1 - 14 1/2 oz. can ready cut tomatoes (Contadina or S&W)  
1 6 oz. can *Contadina* Tomato Paste  
1 cup hearty red wine  
1 Tbs. Balsamic vinegar  
1/2 tsp. sugar  
1 tsp. mixed Italian dried herbs, or to taste  
1 bay leaf  
1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper  
Salt and pepper to taste

I use this basic sauce for a number of dishes, fresh pasta and pizza, of course, but also as the base sauce for meat sauce, Italian sausage sauce, meatball sauce, chicken parmesan, eggplant parmesan and lasagna. It can also be served over baked or grilled white fish or prawns. I am sure you can find numerous uses for it. The sauce is even better after having been frozen.

In a large sauce pan 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.

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