

Don Pomodoro Pasta Sauce

Source: The Splendid Table, Lynne Rossetto Kasper (www.splendidtable.org)

Sauces like this simmer in kitchens from Milan to Palermo. So typical of home cooking, Don Pomodoro used to be put up in jars - now it's frozen, ready for pasta, pizza, pot roast, lasagne & sautés. Its seasonings & proportions of ingredients follow regional dictates & household traditions, but the technique rarely changes. Italian cooks make this sauce with unpeeled fresh tomatoes or canned ones, passing it through a food mill once it's cooked. My preference is for a more rustic, juicy sauce with bits of tomato so I purée it in a blender or food processor. I peel them only if the peel of fresh tomatoes is tough or bitter - a matter of personal choice.

- * 5 large cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
- * 12 large fresh basil leaves, torn
- * 1/4 medium onion, coarsely chopped
- * 1/8 tsp each salt & freshly ground black pepper
- * 5-6 TBS fruity extra-virgin olive oil
- * 3 1/2 lbs mixed ripe, delicious tomatoes, possibly peeled/cored, (do not seed) OR 2 28-oz cans, drained

In a 4-qt saucepan combine garlic, basil, onion, salt, pepper & oil. Heat over medium high 1 minute, no more. Add tomatoes, breaking them as they go into the pan. Bring to a lively bubble, uncovered & cook 30 minutes, or till thick & sauce is reduced by half. Stir often, watching for sticking or scorching.

Remove pan from heat, cover & let stand 15 minutes. Italian cooks pass the sauce through a food mill to remove seeds & any skins. I prefer puréeing in a blender or food processor. If desired, cool/refrigerate up to 2 days, or freeze up to 3 months.