



Steamy "Pasta e Fagioli" Italian Tomato Soup

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 15 / **Cook Time** 20 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

sauté: to cook or brown food in a pan containing a small quantity of butter, oil, or other fat.

simmer: to cook a food gently, usually in a liquid, until softened.

dice: to cut foods into small pieces of equal size so that the food is cooked evenly or looks uniform and pleasant when used in the recipe.

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls).

mirepoix: pronounced MEER-pwah, a French term for an aromatic blend of diced carrots, celery, and onions that have been slowly sautéed in butter or oil until tender and sweet to add flavor to sauces, soups, stews, and stocks.

Equipment

- Large pot
- Large bowl
- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Measuring spoons
- Measuring cups
- Wooden spoon
- Can opener

Colander or strainer

Ladle

Ingredients

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2 celery stalks

2 medium carrots

1 medium yellow onion

2 garlic cloves OR 1 tsp garlic powder

2 T vegetable oil **

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp ground black pepper

1 T tomato paste **(for NIGHTSHADE ALLERGY sub pumpkin purée)**

1 sprig fresh thyme OR 1 tsp ground thyme

2 tsp Italian seasoning

1 14-oz can diced tomatoes **(for NIGHTSHADE ALLERGY sub 1 C diced mushrooms—more info below)**

1 15-oz can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed **(for LEGUME ALLERGY sub 1 C diced zucchini—more info below)**

1 C ditalini pasta or other small pasta **(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free pasta)**

4 C water

1 vegetable bouillon cube OR 2 tsp vegetable bouillon base **(Check label for possible allergens, like gluten, soy, or nightshade, and omit if necessary)**

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Soy: Substitute canola oil or other nut-free high-smoking point oil for vegetable oil.

Nightshade: Substitute pumpkin purée for tomato paste. For 1 14-oz can diced tomatoes, substitute 1 C diced mushrooms (add to the skillet in step 2).

Legume: For 1 15-oz can cannellini beans, substitute 1 C diced zucchini (add to the skillet in step 2).

Gluten/Soy/Nightshade: Check bouillon label for possible allergens and omit if necessary.

Gluten/Wheat: Substitute gluten-free/nut-free pasta.

Instructions

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intro

"Buongiorno" (Bwohn-jee-OR-noh) or "Good morning" or "Good day" in Italian! Today, we will visit Italy for some "pasta e fagioli" (FAH-joe-lee), which means "pasta and beans" in Italian, the stars of this classic soup. Simmering tomato, white beans, and pasta with a few seasonings is all you need to make a pot of this hearty soup.

measure + chop

Roughly dice **2 celery stalks**, **2 medium carrots** (kids can also grate the carrots), and **1 medium yellow onion**. This combination of vegetables is called a "mirepoix" (MEER-pwah). Place the mirepoix in a large bowl. Also, mince **2 garlic cloves** OR measure and add **1 teaspoon of garlic powder** and add to the mirepoix. Measure **2 tablespoons of vegetable oil** and pour into a large pot over medium heat.

sauté + stir

Pour the mirepoix into the hot oil and sauté for 5 minutes. After stirring and sizzling for 5 minutes, measure and add **1 teaspoon salt**, **1/2 teaspoon black pepper**, **1 tablespoon tomato paste**, **1 fresh thyme sprig** OR **1 teaspoon ground thyme**, and **2 teaspoons Italian seasoning**. Stir the mixture for another 2 minutes while you do a little counting in Italian: 1 uno (OO-noh), 2 due (DOO-eh), 3 tre (treh), 4 quattro (KWAHT-troh), 5 cinque (CHEEN-kweh), 6 sei (SEH-ee), 7 sette (SET-teh), 8 otto (OHT-toh), 9 nove (NOH-veh), 10 dieci (dee-EH-chee).

superstar food spotlight

What exactly is "mirepoix" (MEER-pwah)? Mirepoix, simply put, is carrots, onion, and celery, but really, this mixture is the base of most soups and sauces. Mirepoix was named after the town of Mirepoix, France. A chef of Duke Gaston Pierre de Lévis, an 18th-century French aristocrat who governed the town, created the aromatic trinity food. This French concoction of flavors has lasted the test of time and is still used in restaurant and home kitchens to this day.

pour + simmer

Drain and rinse **1 can of diced tomatoes** and **1 can of cannellini beans**. Measure **1 cup ditalini pasta**, **4 cups water**, and **1 vegetable bouillon cube**. Add the tomatoes, beans, water, and bouillon into the pot with the mirepoix. Bring to a simmer over medium heat.

season + serve

After simmering for at least 15 minutes, taste the soup for flavor. If needed, add salt or pepper to adjust the flavor to your liking. Scoop the soup with a ladle and pour into bowls. Serve alongside your favorite

bread or **Dreamy Dunkable Dinner Rolls**. Eat and Enjoy! "Ciao" (Chow) or "Goodbye" in Italian!

Featured Ingredient: Tomato!

Hi! I'm Tomato!

"I'm a beautiful, juicy red Tomato. Do you pronounce my name: "tuh-may-tow" or "tuh-mah-tow?" Either way you slice it (or say it), we tomatoes are wonderfully adaptable. You'll find us fresh or cooked on sandwiches, in salads, tacos, soups, stews, sauces, and much more."

History & Etymology

The tomatoes we have now descended from the pea-size fruit of wild plants that grew in western South America. Mesoamericans were the first to domesticate the tomato plant sometime before 500 BCE. Hernán Cortés, a Spanish conquistador, may have brought tomatoes back to Europe in the 16th century after conquering the Aztec city, Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City).

Tomatoes cultivated in North American colonies in the early 1700s may have been introduced from the Caribbean. Thomas Jefferson also brought tomato seeds back from France. Before tomatoes were used in cooking, the plants were used ornamentally due to some people's beliefs that they were poisonous. One reason for this error was that tomatoes come from the nightshade family, including the belladonna plant (or deadly nightshade), which has highly toxic leaves and berries. Another reason may be that the pewter plates they used back then adversely reacted to the acid in tomato juice.

China is by far the largest producer of tomatoes in the world. In the United States, California and Florida produce the most tomatoes.

The American and British pronunciations of "tomato" were made famous by an Ira and George Gershwin song from 1937 called "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off." Americans pronounce the word "tuh-may-tow," and the British say "tuh-mah-tow."

The word "tomato" comes from the Spanish, French, or Portuguese "tomate," from the Nahuatl "tomatl."

Anatomy

The tomato is a berry from the tomato plant (*Solanum Lycopersicum*), a perennial vine. It is part of the Solanaceae family, like the potato, pepper, eggplant, and petunia. Since it is a berry, it is a fruit, although mainly used as a vegetable.

A tomato's color is usually red but can also be yellow, orange, green, or purple. Tomatoes can be spherical, oval, or pear-shaped. Their flesh is pulpy with cavities, called locules, that hold the seeds.

There are more than 10,000 tomato varieties. Some are hybrids, and some are heirlooms. An heirloom tomato is a variety that has been grown for generations on a family farm rather than commercially.

Unfortunately, in the past 40 years, many heirloom varieties have been lost, along with the smaller family farms that grew them. However, hundreds of heirloom tomato varieties are still available.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

If you are growing your own tomatoes, pick them from the vine while still firm, with a slight give, and before their ripe color (usually red) deepens too much. While holding the fruit, twist it off the stem until it snaps off. The leaf on top of the tomato (the calyx) and part of the stem will come with it. You can also snip it off using garden scissors.

When you choose tomatoes at the store, pick fruit that has smooth, brightly colored skin with no cracks or bruises, is firm but gives with slight pressure, is heavy for its size, and has a pleasant, aromatic smell. Avoid tomatoes with pale or dark spots.

Store tomatoes at room temperature, as their flavor will decrease in a refrigerator's cold temperature. Wait to wash them until you are ready to use them.

If you plan to make a tomato sauce or soup using fresh, raw tomatoes, you will want to peel them first. This can be difficult without some preparation: First, put a pot of water on the stove to boil and fill a large bowl with cold or icy water. Next, after washing the tomatoes, use your knife to cut a shallow 'X' through the skin at the top or bottom of each one. Then use a slotted spoon to place the tomatoes into the boiling water until the skin begins to loosen and peel back at the incision, about 30 to 60 seconds. Finally, immediately dunk them into the ice water. The skin should peel easily now. You can also remove the seeds by cutting the peeled tomatoes in half and scooping the seeds out with a spoon.

Tomatoes are versatile vegetables for cooking. Ripe tomatoes can be prepared fresh, stuffed, baked, boiled, or stewed, and they are the base for many sauces. You can also pickle green, unripe tomatoes, add them to salsa or bread and fry them.

Nutrition

Tomatoes are a moderate source of vitamin C, and cooked tomatoes are high in lycopene, an antioxidant, which may help protect your body's cells from damage, strengthen your immune system, and prevent some diseases.