

**The History of Sauce ala Dino**

A crowd pleaser, make sure you serve this only to loved ones and share the recipe sparingly...after all, it is a family secret! My mother, Loring Dixon, was once a fledgling young wife with a hungry husband...unfortunately she was clueless in the kitchen. Mushy pasta, soupy tomatoes, and sauce with questionable origins...you get my drift. As luck would have it, the kitchen gods were looking out for young Loring and had the grace to move an Italian woman next door - Dino. Dino had a flair for ingredients; cooking was in her blood. Knowing a good sauce when he smelled one, my father quickly developed a friendship with Dino and encouraged my mother to do the same. Out of that friendship came many a dinner and several recipes, including the one described below. Enjoy! Kylie

**Ingredients**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 28oz. can tomatoes - diced or crushed with puree (or whole if you feel like crushing something).</li> <li>- 1 8 oz. can of mushrooms - stems and pieces</li> <li>- 1 lb. Italian Sausage. Do NOT buy "breakfast sausage"</li> <li>- 1 8 oz. can tomato sauce</li> <li>- 1 lb. ground beef</li> <li>- 3 cloves garlic</li> <li>- 1 large yellow onion</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ½ teaspoon dried thyme</li> <li>- 1 bay leaf (Turkish, not Californian)</li> <li>- 1½ teaspoons dried oregano</li> <li>- ¼ cup dried parsley</li> <li>- ½ teaspoon sugar</li> <li>- Red pepper flakes</li> <li>- Salt (just keep it handy)</li> <li>- ½ teaspoon black pepper (and keep it handy)</li> <li>- Olive oil (just keep it handy)</li> <li>- Glass of wine (keep it handy but taste often to ensure quality)</li> </ul> |
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**The Process**

- Open all your cans (tomatoes, tomato sauce, mushrooms), remove tops. Let them sit until you need them. Do not drain.
- Peel and chop the onion and mince the garlic.
- Cut the sausage into 1" pieces.
- Heat a frying pan at medium heat until it warms, add about a tablespoon of olive oil (just enough to swirl around the pan) and toss in your sausage pieces. You want these to brown - occasionally shake the pan.
- After about 5 minutes the sausage should be browned. Turn off the heat and let it sit on the stove.
- Put your big "sauce cooking pot" on the stove and turn the heat on medium. When it's heated up (just give it a minute), add about 2 tablespoons of olive oil to warm. When warm (but not loudly sizzling - turn it down if it's "talking" too loud) add the garlic and onion, and cook on medium heat until they just start to become translucent. (You can start this process while the sausage is cooking - depends on how much multi-tasking you are comfortable with).
- Add the ground beef to the pot (with the onion/garlic mix) and break up with a spoon while it browns.

Now to the "wow this is easy" part! Ready...

- Swirl and sip wine
- Dump your cans of tomatoes, tomato sauce and mushrooms into the pot (with the juices from the cans). Give it a stir.
- Toss in the sausage. Give it another stir. Sip the wine.
- Now add the spices (thyme, bay leaf, oregano, parsley)- just throw them in! Also throw in a few shakes of the red pepper flakes (amount depends on how daring your guests are).
- Add the sugar. Sip the wine.
- Add the pepper and then throw in a little salt. I add salt slowly as I go (careful not to overdo it).

Turn the heat to medium low and bring to slow simmer. Go call me and tell me how good it's starting to smell. Have second glass of wine. Let it simmer for about 20 minutes. After that time, taste it and re-season if needed. When I say re-season, I mean it's basically all fair game - sometimes I end up doubling the thyme/oregano/parsley/ etc. if needed - just depends on how it tastes. Put the top on the pot - you don't want the whole thing to evaporate, turn it to low and just let it go for a bit. At some point in this process you can cook the pasta (about 1 lb will equal the number of servings of this sauce). You could eat it now, and it will be good - but it gets better with a little time.

**Variations**

- o I don't suppose sausage is necessary, but I have trouble thinking of life without sausage. I once read that life without ice cream would be "darkness and chaos" and I tend to feel the same way about certain processed meats.
- o I might try it with ground turkey. I like the red meat effect, but turkey could lighten it up a bit.
- o Obviously you can try a variety of pastas. It's a heavy sauce, so I don't suggest angel hair, but a good penne might just work.

Add some garlic toast and a salad and you have a meal! Heck, I eat the stuff for breakfast. It also freezes really well. Pop a bunch into a Tupperware and leave it until you need it. To re-heat, take it right from the freezer into the microwave just to loosen it. Heat it just enough to get it from the Tupperware into a pan. Warm it up and enjoy. Mangiare!