Cleo Coyle's Meatless Italian Spaghetti Sauce

from Fresh Tomatoes

Text and photos (c) by Alice Alfonsi who writes [The Coffeehouse Mysteries](#) as [Cleo Coyle](#) with her husband, Marc Cerasini.

This 2-hour meatless sauce will fool anyone into thinking it was simmered for 6-hours with meat. The rich depth of flavor is well worth an afternoon, making it the way the "old timers" did. The very smell of fresh tomatoes cooking is like nothing else on earth. You can make this sauce out of almost any variety of tomatoes you find whether at a farm stand, in your garden, or your local grocery. You can even mix the varieties, as long as they're ripe. During the Great Depression, my dad helped his father plant 2,000 tomato plants every spring on their small family farm, so he had no problem tending the 100 or so plants he sowed for our little family while I was growing up. Fresh pasta sauce was part of that yield, which is why I'm dedicating this recipe to my pop, Antonio "Tony" Alfonsi, who passed away at the age of 83. My husband and I dedicated one of our [Coffeehouse Mysteries](#) to him—[Billionaire Blend](#), and one of our [Haunted Bookshop Mysteries](#), as well. May you too cook with love and make everlasting memories of your own...

~ Alice Alfonsi (Cleo Coyle)

Makes about 1-1/2 to 2 quarts *(depending on thickness)*

Ingredients:

8 pounds ripe tomatoes *(about 20 to 25 tomatoes)*
5 celery ribs
2 carrots
1 large white onion
1/3 cup roughly chopped parsley leaves *(curly or flat-leaf)*
1 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons garlic powder
1 Tablespoon dried basil *(or 3 fresh basil leaves, [chiffonade](#).)*
1 Tablespoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 cup of your favorite red wine *(I'm using Chianti this go-round)*
1-4 cups vegetable stock *(or water)*

Free Recipe Guide to Cleo's new culinary mystery ***No Roast for the Weary***: [click here](#).

Step 1- Prep the fresh tomato base: The taste of fresh summer tomatoes in this sauce is truly amazing, but you must first properly prepare the tomatoes. The process of peeling, de-seeding, and pulping those little orbs may sound difficult, but it's very easy—and once learned, the techniques can be used in a lifetime of cooking. **See my instructions at the end of this recipe.**

Step 2 - Prep the veggie aromatics: Roughly chop the celery, carrots, parsley, and onion. Add them to a food processor with the olive oil and pulse until finely chopped—but do not puree or liquefy.

Step 3 - Add the spices and ignite: Add this veggie mix to a large pot with the spices (garlic powder, fresh or dried basil, dried oregano, salt, and pepper) and sauté (while stirring) over medium heat for about 10 minutes to release the flavors. Be sure to stir to keep the mixture from burning.

Step 4 - Add tomato pulp, wine, and simmer: Add the quart of tomatoes that you have peeled, de-seeded, and cooked down into pulp (see instructions at end). Pour in the wine and simmer on low for 45 minutes to 1 hour, stirring to prevent scorching. You're watching for the mixture to thicken into a beautifully condensed and very flavorful sauce. Now all you need to do is thin it out….

Step 5 - Finish with stock (or water): To thin out this very thick sauce, stir in 1 to 4 cups of vegetable stock (or water). Continue cooking and stirring for another 20 to 30 minutes. If you like, use an immersion blender to smooth out any remaining chunks before serving. (We do!) Depending on your own taste, continue adding stock or water and/or cooking until you get the consistency (thinness or thickness) that you prefer.

Storing: This sauce will stay fresh about 1 week in the refrigerator or up to 6 months in the freezer.

A daughter may outgrow your lap,
but she will never outgrow your heart.
I love you, Dad. Rest now and
I will see you again…

~ Alice (Cleo)

How to Prep Fresh Tomatoes for Italian Spaghetti Sauce

Text and photos (c) by Alice Alfonsi who writes The Coffeehouse Mysteries as Cleo Coyle with her husband, Marc Cerasini.

Peeling and de-seeding tomatoes will remove bitterness and unwanted textures from your sauce. Because this step brings your sauce to a higher level of taste, it's truly worth it, and it's very easy to do. To watch a chef from the Culinary Institute of America perform this very easy process, click here to watch a YouTube video.

1 - Peel your tomatoes: Remove stems and shallowly core as shown in my photo. Slice a small X at the bottom of each tomato.

Place a few tomatoes at a time into a pot of simmering (or boiling) water. After 15 to 30 seconds (no more) remove immediately and drop in a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking.

Using your fingers, gently peel the skin off the tomatoes. **You can save the skins to make a delicious condiment "sun-dried tomato flakes"—get that recipe by clicking here.**

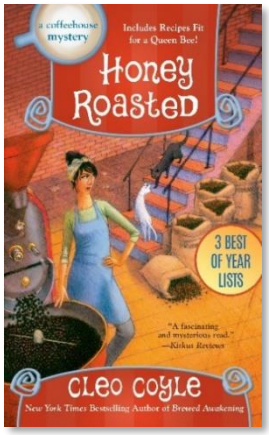
If you have any trouble with peeling a tomato, simply place it back in the boiling water for another 15 seconds and repeat the process.

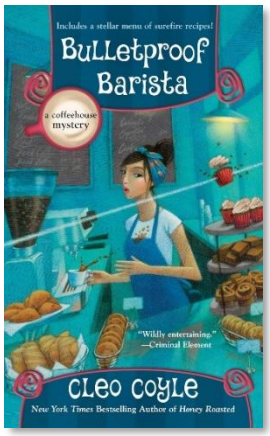
2 – De-seed your tomatoes: Cut the tomatoes in half--make sure you cut it as shown, crosswise, along its equator. Using a small spoon, gently dig out the seeds and discard. (You will not get every single seed out, and that's okay, just get as many as you can and you'll improve the sauce flavor.)

3 – Pulp your tomatoes: Place a large pot on the stove. Using a clean hand, roughly crush each peeled and seeded tomato over the pot and toss inside. Cook down the tomatoes over medium heat for about 20 minutes, stirring every so often to prevent scorching. Continue mashing the tomatoes with a large spoon as they cook.

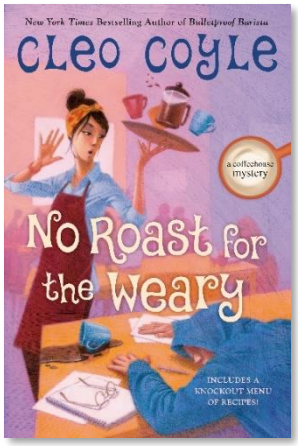
Cook until the **excess water has evaporated** and you are left with tomato pulp. 8 pounds of tomatoes will give you about 4 cups (1 quart) of tomato pulp. While the tomatoes are cooking down, begin the Meatless Spaghetti Sauce recipe, starting with **Step 2**, and when you're finished, be sure to...

Eat with joy! ~ Cleo





The Coffeehouse Mysteries are bestselling culinary mysteries, set in a landmark Greenwich Village coffeehouse. Each includes the added bonus of recipes.
To learn more and see more recipes, visit Cleo Coyle's online coffeehouse at www.CoffeehouseMystery.com
And her recipe blog at www.CleoCoyleRecipes.com



Honey Roasted
"A honey of a tale" ~ Kirkus
Free Recipe Guide here.

Bulletproof Barista
"Wildly entertaining" ~ Criminal Element
Free Recipe Guide here.

***NEW!** > No Roast for the Weary*
"Intriguing" "Fun" "Delightful"
Free Recipe Guide here.