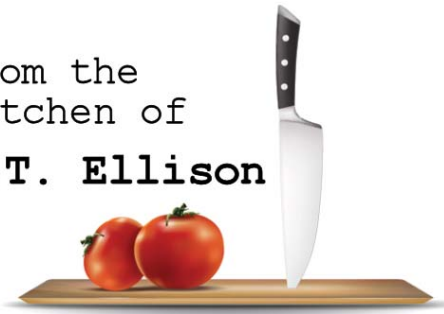


From the
kitchen of

J.T. Ellison



Ingredients:

- ✓ Roma tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, beefsteak — whatever you've got growing or looks yummy at the store
- ✓ Ten cloves of garlic
- ✓ ½ large onion, sliced
- ✓ five big basil leaves
- ✓ 1 bay leaf, if so desired
- ✓ Generous helpings of ground salt and pepper
- ✓ 1 teaspoon of Italian Seasoning

Homemade, Homegrown Roasted Marinara Sauce

Two years ago, I put in my first garden. There are certain elements of daily life that I figured would be easy to manufacture for myself in my backyard. Carrots, celery, onions, for mire poix. Garlic, basil, tomatoes for sauces. A few peppers and jalapeños and cilantro, for Mexican.

Well, suffice it to say, I'm not much of a gardener. Part of the problem lies in not being home consistently in the summer, and the other is an inherent lack of gardening skills. (In Colorado, we cultivated rock gardens. Much less maintenance.)

But I have managed to create bumper crops of Roma tomatoes, and kick ass sweet basil. So I set about making my own marinara sauce with these lovelies. And turns out, it's brilliant. Quick, easy, yummy and adaptable to most any desire. Remember now, I'm not a measurer, so every batch is slightly different, but here's the gist. This is a great experimental food, you really can't mess it up.

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 425 degrees
- Wash and cut tomatoes in half — layer, cut side up, in a lasagna pan. Crowd the pool, they won't mind.
- Drop in peeled cloves, spacing appropriately
- Add onion, distribute evenly
- Salt and pepper the whole crew, then lightly sprinkle on some Italian Seasoning
- Lay on the basil leaves
- Into the oven it goes, for 45 minutes

Sit back and relax, enjoying the scent

- Take it out of the oven
- Strain it into a saucepan
- Take the solids and put them in a food processor
- Run until smooth
- Add this back to the drippings in the saucepan
- Heat it up, add some parmesan cheese
- Put it on your favorite pasta or pizza crust, and you're done.

(continued ...)

*As seen in J.T. Ellison's newsletter. For more recipes, visit JTEllison.com. Want a wine to go with your recipe? Check out J.T.'s wine blog, *The Wine Vixen*, at TheWineVixen.com.*



Homemade, Homegrown Roasted Marinara Sauce

Easy and Quick Variations:

Fra Diavlo — Add cooked pancetta, pancetta oil and pepper flake
Bolognese — fold in ground beef, turkey, pork and or crumbled Italian sausage

Puttanesca — add a tsp (to taste, really) of anchovy paste

À la Vodka — add a some heavy cream and splash of vodka

You get the idea. This base works for most everything on the red sauce side of the family.

I like it on pappardella — the tender noodles really allow the flavor of the sauce to shine through. It's great with gnocci (as in gnocci a la sorrentina) and mozzarella, too! It also freezes well. Double or triple the batch and you'll have sauce for several meals.

I can't wait to hear what you think — let me know how it works for you!

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