Prep Time: 20 minutes
Cook Time: 25 minutes
Total Time: 45 minutes (plus canning time)
Servings: Makes about 6 pint jars (12 servings)

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Introduction

Remember the comforting, tomato-y taste of Spaghetti-O’s from childhood? That iconic ring-shaped pasta swimming in a sweet, savory tomato sauce is a nostalgia bomb for so many of us. But store-bought versions are often loaded with preservatives, excess sodium, and ingredients you cannot pronounce. This Homemade Canned Spaghetti-O’s recipe recreates that beloved classic from scratch—with real tomatoes, simple seasonings, and tender little pasta rings—so you can stock your pantry with a wholesome, homemade version your whole family will love.

This recipe is perfect for home canners who want convenient, shelf-stable meals ready to

heat and eat on busy days. The sauce is rich and slightly sweet, the pasta is perfectly tender, and the whole thing comes together in under an hour. Whether you are feeding picky eaters, preparing for emergencies, or simply craving a taste of childhood, these homemade Spaghetti-O’s deliver comfort by the jarful. And because you control the ingredients, you can adjust the sweetness, sodium, and seasoning to suit your family’s tastes.

Ingredients

For the Pasta:

- 8 oz ring-shaped pasta (anelletti, or small pasta like ditalini or elbow macaroni)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt (for the pasta water)

For the Tomato Sauce:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, finely diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 (28 oz) can crushed tomatoes

- 1 (15 oz) can tomato sauce
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar (or honey, adjust to taste)
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon salt (adjust to taste)
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese (optional, for depth)
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter (optional, for richness)

For Canning:

- 6 pint (16 oz) glass canning jars with lids and bands, sterilized
- Large canning pot with a rack
- Jar lifter and funnel
- Citric acid or bottled lemon juice (¼ teaspoon per pint jar) — essential for safe water-bath canning of tomato products

Equipment

- Large pot for pasta
- Large saucepan or Dutch oven for sauce
- Colander
- Wooden spoon or spatula
- Canning jars and lids
- Large water-bath canning pot
- Funnel and jar lifter

- Measuring cups and spoons

Instructions

Phase 1: Prep the Ingredients (Time: 5 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Sterilize the Jars: Wash the jars, lids, and bands in hot, soapy water. Sterilize by boiling in a large pot of water for 10 minutes, or run through a dishwasher on the hottest setting. Keep jars hot until ready to fill.

2. Prep the Vegetables: Finely dice the onion and mince the garlic.

3. Measure the Ingredients: Have all sauce ingredients measured and ready, as the sauce cooks quickly.

Phase 2: Cook the Pasta (Time: 8 Minutes | Intensity: Medium)

1. Boil Water: Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the olive oil to prevent sticking.

2. Cook the Pasta: Add the ring pasta and cook for 1-2 minutes less than the package directions—the pasta should be slightly undercooked (al dente) since it will continue to soften during canning and reheating. Do not overcook.

3. Drain and Rinse: Drain the pasta and rinse briefly under cold water to stop the cooking process. Set aside.

Phase 3: Make the Tomato Sauce (Time: 15 Minutes | Intensity: Medium)

1. Sauté Aromatics: Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the diced onion and cook for 3-4 minutes until softened and translucent.

2. Add Garlic: Add the minced garlic and cook for another 1 minute until fragrant. Do not let the garlic brown.

3. Add Tomatoes & Seasonings: Stir in the crushed tomatoes, tomato sauce, broth, sugar, oregano, basil, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, and pepper. Stir in the Parmesan cheese and butter if using.

4. Simmer: Bring the sauce to a gentle simmer. Reduce the heat to low and cook for 10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sauce has thickened slightly and the flavors have melded. Taste and adjust the sweetness and seasoning to your preference.

5. Combine: Gently fold the cooked pasta into the sauce until evenly coated. Remove from heat.

Phase 4: Fill the Jars (Time: 10 Minutes | Intensity: Medium-

High)

1. Add Citric Acid: Add ¼ teaspoon of citric acid (or 1 tablespoon of bottled lemon juice) to the bottom of each sterilized pint jar. This is critical for safe water-bath canning of tomato-based products.

2. Fill the Jars: Using a funnel, carefully ladle the pasta-sauce mixture into the hot jars, leaving 1 inch of headspace. Use a spoon to distribute the pasta and sauce evenly.

3. Remove Air Bubbles: Gently tap the jars on the counter or run a plastic knife around the inside edge to release air bubbles. Wipe the rims clean with a damp cloth.

4. Seal: Place the lids on the jars and tighten the bands until fingertip-tight.

Phase 5: Water-Bath Canning (Time: 35 Minutes | Intensity: Medium-High)

1. Prepare the Water Bath: Fill a large canning pot with water and bring it to a boil. Make sure there is enough water to cover the jars by at least 1 inch.

2. Process: Carefully lower the jars into the boiling water bath using a jar lifter. Ensure the jars are fully submerged. Process pint jars for 35 minutes (adjust for altitude if necessary: add 5 minutes for 1,000-3,000 ft, 10 minutes for 3,000-6,000 ft, and 15 minutes above 6,000 ft).

3. Cool & Check Seals: Remove the jars from the water bath and place them on a towel to cool undisturbed for 12-24 hours. Check the seals by pressing the center of each lid—it

should not pop up. If any jars did not seal, refrigerate them and use within a week.

Phase 6: Serve (Time: 5 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Reheat: To serve, open a jar and pour the contents into a small saucepan. Heat over medium heat for 3-4 minutes, stirring occasionally, until heated through. Alternatively, microwave in a microwave-safe bowl for 1-2 minutes.

2. Serve: Serve hot with a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese or a pat of butter. Enjoy!

Flavor Variations

- Meatball Spaghetti-O’s: Add ½ cup of cooked, crumbled Italian sausage or mini meatballs to the sauce before filling the jars.

- Cheesy Spaghetti-O’s: Stir in ½ cup of shredded cheddar or mozzarella cheese just before serving (do not add before canning).

- Spicy Version: Add ½ teaspoon of red pepper flakes or a pinch of cayenne pepper to the sauce for a grown-up kick.

- Low-Sodium: Reduce the salt to ¼ teaspoon and use no-salt-added tomato products and broth.

- Gluten-Free: Use gluten-free ring pasta or small gluten-free elbows.

Nutrition

Note: Nutritional information is an estimate based on ½ jar (1 serving) and does not include optional garnishes.

Serving Size: ½ pint jar
Calories: 145
Total Fat: 4g
Saturated Fat: 1g
Cholesterol: 5mg
Sodium: 380mg
Total Carbohydrates: 24g
Dietary Fiber: 3g
Sugars: 7g
Protein: 4g