- Prep Time: 15 minutes
- Cook Time: 1 hour 30 minutes
- Total Time: 1 hour 45 minutes
- Yields: 6-8 servings (about 1.5 quarts / 1.5 liters)
- Cuisine: Italian
- Course: Sauce / Condiment

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The “Intensity” Meter

- Skill Level: Easy (2/5) . This recipe is very forgiving and perfect for beginner cooks.

- Flavor Intensity: Rich & Robust (4/5) . The slow simmer develops deep, complex flavors.
- Kitchen Effort: Low (1.5/5) . Mostly hands-off, with a little stirring required.
- Aroma: High (5/5) . Your kitchen will smell like an Italian trattoria.

Ingredients

The Holy Trinity:

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, finely diced
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

The Base:

- 2 (28-ounce / 800g) cans whole peeled San Marzano tomatoes (or other high-quality plum tomatoes)
- 1 (6-ounce / 170g) can tomato paste

- ½ cup dry red wine (optional, but highly recommended – use something you'd drink)

The Flavor Builders:

- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt (plus more to taste)
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- A small pinch of red pepper flakes (optional, for a little heat)
- 1 large handful of fresh basil leaves, torn
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter (the secret weapon for a silky finish)
- A small piece of Parmigiano-Reggiano rind (optional, but adds incredible umami)

Instructions

Step 1: Sauté the Aromatics (The Foundation)
Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the finely diced onion and a pinch of salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5-7 minutes, until

the onion is soft and translucent. Add the sliced garlic and cook for another 1-2 minutes, until fragrant. Be careful not to let the garlic brown.

Step 2: Deglaze and Develop Flavor
Pour in the red wine (if using) and increase the heat to medium-high. Let it bubble and reduce for about 2-3 minutes, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot. This is where the flavor lives! Stir in the tomato paste and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly, to caramelize it slightly and deepen its flavor.

Step 3: The Tomatoes
Add the canned tomatoes to the pot. Using your hands (my preferred, messy method!), a potato masher, or two forks, crush the whole tomatoes. This creates a beautiful, rustic texture. Add the salt, black pepper, oregano, and red pepper flakes.

Step 4: The Slow Simmer (The Magic Hour)
Bring the sauce to a gentle simmer. Once you see a few bubbles, reduce the heat to low. This is a gentle, low-intensity cook. Add the Parmigiano-Reggiano rind (if using) and half of the torn basil. Partially cover the pot with a lid, leaving it slightly ajar to allow steam to escape. Let it simmer for 1 hour to 1 hour 30 minutes, stirring every 20-30 minutes to prevent sticking. The sauce should reduce slightly and become thick and glossy.

Step 5: The Finishing Touch
After the sauce has simmered, remove the cheese rind. Taste the sauce and adjust seasoning, adding more salt or pepper if needed. Turn off the heat. Stir in the remaining fresh basil and the tablespoon of butter. The butter will melt into the sauce, giving it a luxurious, velvety texture and a beautiful sheen.

Step 6: Serve or Store
Your sauce is now ready to be devoured! Serve it over your favorite pasta, use it as a base for pizza, or let it cool completely before storing.

Recipe Notes & Variations

- Tomato Texture: This recipe makes a rustic, slightly chunky sauce. For a perfectly smooth sauce, use an immersion blender or a regular blender (in batches, and be careful with hot liquids!) after the sauce is finished cooking.

- The Secret to Great Flavor: The Parmigiano-Reggiano rind is a classic Italian trick. It adds a depth of savory, salty, umami flavor that is hard to replicate. Don’t skip it if you can!

- No Wine? You can substitute the red wine with an equal amount of beef or vegetable broth for a slightly different, but still delicious, flavor profile.

- Herb Variations: Feel free to add other herbs like a sprig of rosemary or thyme during the simmer. Remove the stems before serving.

Nutrition Information

Note: Nutritional information is an estimate and will vary based on exact ingredients used. This is for a single serving (1/8th of the recipe).

- Serving Size: ~3/4 cup (180g)

- Calories: 145 kcal

- Total Fat: 8g
    - Saturated Fat: 2g
- Carbohydrates: 14g
    - Fiber: 3g
    - Sugars: 8g
- Protein: 3g
- Sodium: 380mg (this will vary greatly depending on the saltiness of your canned tomatoes and cheese rind)
- Potassium: 600mg