

Cynthia's Italian Family Spaghetti Sauce "Recipe"

- In a pestle and mortar grind together oregano, sage, rosemary, and thyme. You can also use a blender if that is easier for you.
- Chop red and yellow onions and several cloves of garlic.
- Saute onions and garlic in olive oil until translucent.
- Stir in chopped mushrooms.
- Add 3 or 4 whole bay leaves and a handful of the mashed herbs.
- Gently brown meat (ground beef, lamb, pork, chicken) in the mixture. If you want a vegetarian sauce, skip this part.
- Cut 6-10 tomatoes into small pieces. Smash half of the tomatoes. Add cut pieces and the tomato paste to the meat mixture.
- Pour in red wine.
- Tear 4 or 5 basil leaves into pieces and stir into pot.
- Continue adding more wine as necessary.
- Simmer at lowest heat for several hours until all the flavors have melded together. Turn off the burner to let sit.
- Sprinkle sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste.



Using a mortar and pestle to make Cynthia's heritage spaghetti sauce handed down for generations.

Optional ingredients include peppers or eggplant. To make a Puttanesca, add olives and capers.

The final sauce will be thick, rich and delicious. Don't be afraid to make this in advance as flavors are more delectable the next day. Freeze or can any extra sauce. (I always make a big pot and freeze tubs for later consumption.)

Pour over spaghetti, ravioli, lasagna, or any pasta. Toss lightly to blend the sauce. Top with chopped parsley, torn basil leaves, and grated parmesan. Serve with crusty sourdough, a romaine lettuce salad, and a glass of sustainable, locally grown, aged, and bottled Captain Vineyards Petite Sirah. Finish off your meal with fall fruits: a bunch of grapes, tangy tangerine segments, crunchy Asian pears, and a few figs. Buon appetito.

What are you harvesting in your garden right now? Do you have a family "Fall in a Pot" recipe to share with others?

My mom taught me that expressing love came from gardens and homemade food. My dad taught me that farmers feed the hungry and wine is the nectar of the gods. Both gave their hearts. During these very challenging times as we pray that our California vineyards survive this ordeal, let's toast to life with a glass of local vino and welcome fall with a pot of goodness from our gardens.

In my next column, I plan to be outside once again offering you guidance for autumn gardening. Until then, limit your outdoor exposure when it's smoky and make sure to water your landscape deeply in the early mornings or late evenings. Be aware that your containers may need a daily dose of H2O. For the next two to three months until the rain begins to fall, our area is at imminent risk of fire danger. Be ready to evacuate. Read my article on what you need to know and do to be prepared.

<https://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1414/Are-you-ready-to-evacuate.html>
For a Zoom presentation of, "Tips, Tricks, and Tonics in the Garden" join me on Thursday, Sept. 17, as I kick off the 50th Anniversary of the Moraga Garden Club. For information on this Zoom meeting, call Membership Chair Jane Magnani at (925) 451-7031 for times to join in the conversation and presentation. I'll be participating from my patio for a light, fun, informative, and hopefully smoke-free lecture. Happy gardening. Happy growing.