

The Preacher's Pasta (Eccl. 2:24)

Recipe by Stephanie Kunstle Note: Serves 4-6 people.

This sauce is made of fresh ingredients, so the higher quality, the better the flavor.

Ingredients:

- Extra virgin olive oil (about ⅓ cup)
- 2.5 - 3 lbs cherry tomatoes, rinsed
- Coarse sea salt
- 3-4 cloves fresh garlic, minced
- 1-2 Fresno chile peppers (optional) to taste, minced
- 1 lb. Italian sausage - pork or chicken, uncased or removed from casings (sweet, spicy, or mixed)
- ½ medium yellow onion, small dice
- 1 lb. fettuccine, linguine, or spaghetti
- Large handful of fresh basil leaves
- Parmesan cheese (Parmigiano-Reggiano highly recommended)

Preparation:

1: Heat a large pot, dutch oven or sauté pan (something with tall sides recommended) over medium high heat for a minute or two. Add olive oil, let it heat for a minute, then add the tomatoes. Add a generous sprinkling of salt. Be careful -- the oil will pop if any water remains on the tomatoes!

2: Let the tomatoes cook, stirring them every few minutes to prevent sticking to the bottom. They are full of water and are hard to burn, plus a little char adds flavor. They will burst, and cook down into a fresh sauce. Approximately 15-20 minutes.

3: Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to boil over high heat with lid on.

4: Chop the onion, and mince the garlic and chiles.

5: Heat a large sauté pan over medium-low heat, add about 1 Tbsp. olive oil and sauté onions, stirring frequently. You don't want to brown them, just soften them, so keep your eye on them as they cook and become translucent - cook roughly five to ten minutes. Add the sausage, turn the heat up to medium, and cook stirring constantly, breaking it into small pieces. Your goal is to brown the pieces on all sides.

6: Add salt generously to the boiling water (about 1-2 Tbsp), add pasta and stir occasionally to prevent sticking. Cook until "al dente" -- just slightly firm in the center. Do not drain!

7: Keep an eye on those tomatoes. They should be cooking down nicely into a slightly thicker sauce. Use the back of a spoon to press down on any that are still whole. Turn the heat off if the sauce is ready.

8: Add the garlic and chiles to the onion/sausage mixture, reduce heat to medium-low, and sauté, stirring constantly for 3-5 minutes until softened and fragrant. Add this mixture to your tomato sauce. Taste and add a bit more salt, if needed.

9: Using tongs or a pasta server, remove pasta from water and drop directly into tomato sauce. The pasta water has starch which adds a silkiness to the sauce, so it's actually a good thing if some ends up in the sauce. Add about half of the fresh basil leaves.

10: Stir pasta well to incorporate sauce, which should lightly coat the pasta. If the sauce isn't totally silky, add some of the pasta water (a half cup to a cup). Stir well.

11: Serve hot and top with the remaining fresh basil leaves and freshly grated Parmesan. Bon appétit! Or as the Preacher would say: **בון תיאבון!**