

Mangia Bene, Viva Bene

By FRANK ZEOLI

Pasta Fagioli (FAZOOOL)



Prep Time: 5 Minutes

Cook Time: 1 Hour

Ingredients

- 2 - 28 oz cans of plum tomatoes (puree with a blender)
- 1 medium sized onion (diced)
- 6 cloves of garlic (minced)
- 1 lb. of ditalini or elbow pasta
- 3 - 15 oz cans of cannellini beans
- 2T olive oil
- ¼ cup of parmesan cheese
- ½ teaspoon of salt
- ¼ teaspoon of pepper
- 2T of parsley
- 6-8 basil leaves (fresh, torn)

Instructions

1. In a medium pot, bring salted water to a boil and add the ditalini pasta. When the pasta is al dente, remove the pasta from the water and set aside. **Do not overcook the pasta.**
2. In a separate sauce pot, add the diced onion, minced garlic and olive oil. Sautee for about 3 minutes or until the onions are translucent. Add the tomatoes, parsley, basil, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil then reduce the heat and simmer for about 25 minutes.
3. Add the cannellini beans. **Let it simmer for another 20 minutes stirring occasionally.**

4. Add the tomato mixture to the pasta and mix thoroughly.
5. Add the parmesan cheese and give it another mix.

Serve it hot with some extra grated parmesan cheese on top.

Look for more recipes in the next edition of the SIAMO QUI.



As we begin the season of Lent in the Catholic Church, I am reminded of all the meatless Lenten dishes my grandmother would make. One of my all-time favorites was her **Pasta Fagioli** or **Pasta Fasul (Fazool)**, as we would call it. It was a simple dish that had only a few ingredients, pasta, beans and tomato sauce.

As I got older, I had a friend, not an Italian, who asked me, “Do you know how to make pasta fazool?” I said, “Is the Pope Catholic?” So, I proceeded to make a batch of my grandmother’s pasta fagioli. After he tasted it, he said, “It’s good but it’s not pasta fazool. Pasta fazool is a soup.” I said, “A soup?” So, I researched it and found that it was made into a soup in many regions of Italy. It was made with celery, carrots, onions and chicken broth. They even added pancetta or sausage. Go figure.

So, with my culinary curiosity, I decided to make it and I served it to my grandmother. I said, “Gram, I made some pasta fazool.” She looked at it and said, “That’s not pasta fazool. Pasta fazool is pasta and beans, plain and simple.”

That was my grandmother. No deviations from the traditional dishes she had grown to know and love. Here is my pasta fagioli recipe, the one my grandmother approved of. Enjoy!