

Pasta with Creamy Tomato Sauce

Serves 4 to 6

Use high quality crushed tomatoes; our favorite brands are Tuttorosso and Muir Glen.

3 tablespoon unsalted butter

1 small onion, minced

1 ounce prosciutto, minced (about 2 tablespoons)

1 bay leaf

Pinch red pepper flakes

Table salt

3 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 1 tablespoon)

2 ounces oil packed sun dried tomatoes, drained, rinsed, patted dry, and chopped coarse (about 3 tablespoons)

2 tablespoons tomato paste

1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons dry white wine

2 cups plus 2 tablespoons crushed tomatoes (from one 28 ounce can; see note)

1 pound ziti, penne, or other short tubular pasta

1/2 cup heavy cream

Ground black pepper

1/4 cup chopped fresh basil leaves

Grated Parmesan cheese, for serving

1. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion, prosciutto, bay leaf, red pepper flakes, and 1/4 teaspoon salt; cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is very soft and beginning to turn light gold, 8 to 12 minutes. Increase the heat to medium high, add the garlic, and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in the sun-dried tomatoes and tomato paste and cook, stirring constantly, until slightly darkened, 1 to 2 minutes. Add 1/4 cup of the wine and cook, stirring frequently, until the liquid has evaporated, 1 to 2 minutes.

2. Add 2 cups of the crushed tomatoes and bring to a simmer. Reduce the heat to low, partially cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the sauce is thickened, 25 to 30 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, bring 4 quarts water to a boil in a large pot. Add 1 tablespoons salt and the pasta to the boiling water and cook, stirring often, until al dente. Reserve 1/2 cup of the cooking water then drain the pasta and return it to the pot.

4. Remove the bay leaf from the sauce and discard. Stir the cream, remaining 2 tablespoons crushed tomatoes, and remaining 2 tablespoons wine into the sauce; season with salt and pepper to taste. Add the sauce to the pasta and adjust the consistency of the sauce with the reserved pasta cooking water as needed. Stir in the basil and serve, passing the Parmesan separately.