

# FOOD52

## Marcella Hazan's Braised Celery with Onion, Pancetta, and Tomatoes

By Genius Recipes

Editors' Comments:

You've got a bundle of celery in the back of your crisper drawer. (Go check. You do.) This is what you should do with it. Stick it in a bath with olive oil, tomato, pancetta, and onion, then stand back. Serve it with a juicy roast chicken, lamb, or veal chops. Polenta or farro. A fried egg with very crisp edges. Bread. Or just nothing. Adapted slightly from [Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking](http://www.amazon.com/Essentials-Classic-Italian-Cooking-Marcella/dp/039458404X/?tag=food52-20) (Alfred Knopf, 1992)

Serves 4 to 6

- 2 pounds celery
  - 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
  - 1 1/2 cup onions sliced very thin
  - 2/3 cups pancetta, cut into strips
  - 3/4 cups canned plum tomatoes, coarsely chopped, with their juice
  - Salt
  - Freshly ground black pepper
1. Cut off the celery's leafy tops, saving the leaves for another use, and detach all the stalks from their base. Use a peeler to pare away most of the strings, and cut the stalks into pieces about 3 inches long. Alternately, if you plan on cooking long past tender (an hour or more), you can skip peeling.
  2. Put the oil and onion in a saute pan, and turn on the heat to medium. Cook and stir the onion until it wilts completely and becomes colored a light gold, then add the pancetta strips.
  3. After a few minutes, when the pancetta's fat loses its flat, white uncooked color and becomes translucent, add the tomatoes with their juice, the celery, salt, and pepper, and toss thoroughly to coat well. Adjust heat to cook at a steady simmer, and put a cover on the pan. After 15 minutes check the celery, cooking it until it feels tender when prodded with a fork. If while the celery is cooking, the pan juices become insufficient, replenish with 2 to 3 tablespoons of water as needed. If on the contrary, when the celery is done, the pan juices are watery, uncover, raise the heat to high, and boil the juices away rapidly. Serve promptly when done.