

Salsa all' Amatriciana

The people of Rome love this pasta sauce, but it actually originated outside of Rome in a town called Amatrice. This is a bold, but perfectly balanced sauce. Great if you don't have much time to cool.

2 tablespoons olive oil

6 ounces pancetta or slab bacon, diced

1 yellow onion, finely chopped

2 garlic cloves, minced

Pinch of dried crushed red pepper flakes

1 (28-ounce) can tomato puree

½ teaspoon sea salt, plus more to taste

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste

Fresh basil, torn apart into smaller pieces

Smidgeon of dried fennel

½ cup grated Pecorino Romano cheese

In a large, heavy skillet, heat the oil over a medium heat. Add the pancetta or bacon and sauté until golden brown, about 8 minutes. Add the onion and sauté until tender, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and red pepper flakes and sauté until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in the tomato puree and ½ teaspoon each of salt and pepper. Add fresh basil and dried fennel. Simmer, uncovered, over medium-low heat until the sauce thickens slightly and the flavors blend. This will take about 15 minutes. Stir in the cheese. Season with more salt and pepper to taste.

Note: The sauce can be made 1 day ahead. Cool, then cover and refrigerate. Rewarm over medium heat before using.

Note: This sauce is perfect with bucatini, perciatelli, or spaghetti