

Thin Spaghetti with Red Clam Sauce
"The Classic Italian Cook Book,"
By Marcella Hazan
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Serves: 4

1 dozen small littleneck clams
1-1/2 teaspoons garlic chopped fine
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon chopped anchovy fillets pr anchovy paste
1-1/2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley
2 cups canned Italian plum tomatoes, coarsely chopped with their juice
Salt
Freshly ground pepper, about 6 twists of the mill
1-pound spaghetti

1. Wash and scrub the clams thoroughly (see below). Heat them over high heat in a covered pan until they open their shells. Detach the clams from the shells and rinse off any sand on the meat by dipping them briefly one at a time in their own juice. Unless the clams are exceptionally small, cut them p into two or more pieces and set aside. Strain the clam juices through a sieve lined with paper towels and set aside.
2. In a saucepan, sauté the garlic in olive oil over medium heat. When the garlic has colored lightly, add the chopped anchovies or paste and stir. Add the chopped parsley, stir, then add the chopped tomatoes and their juice and the strained clam juices. Cook, uncovered, at a gentle simmer for about 25 minutes, or until the tomatoes and oil separate. Taste and correct for salt, then add the pepper. Off the heat, mix in chopped clams. (If you are preparing the sauce ahead of time, hold back the clams until after you've warmed up the sauce; otherwise, they will become tough and rubbery. Film them with a little olive oil to keep them moist).
3. Drop the spaghetti into 4 quarts of boiling salted water and cook until al dente, firm to the bite. (Spaghetti cook very rapidly and should be eaten even slightly more al dente than other pasta.) Drain the pasta immediately when cooked. Transfer to a warm bowl and mix in the sauce, thoroughly seasoning all the strands. Serve right away.

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To Clean Clams

Set the clams in a large basin or sink filled with cold water. Let stand for 5 minutes, then drain and refill the basin with clean water. Scrub the clams vigorously with a coarse, stiff brush or by rubbing them one against the other. When they are all scrubbed, drain and fill basin again with clean water. Repeat these steps for 20-30 minutes, until you see that the water in the basin remains clear. Transfer the cleaned clams to a bowl