



In the Kitchen

with Barb Agee - June 2018

A Sundry of Sundried Tomato Ideas!

Tomatoes were originally sun-dried to preserve them, then often stored in olive oil with spices. Now we do it so we can revel in their deep intense flavor. Although sun-dried tomatoes have an infinity to Italian cuisine, they are delicious in many types of dishes and cuisines.



Rigatoni with Sun-Dried Tomato and Fennel Sauce

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| 4 slices of bacon, thinly sliced | 2 large cloves garlic, very coarsely chopped |
| ½ cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained*, very coarsely chopped | 1 cup heavy cream |
| 1 tablespoon oil from the sun-dried tomatoes* | 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth |
| 8 medium to large mushrooms, cleaned and very coarsely chopped | ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes |
| Kosher salt | 16 ounces dried rigatoni |
| 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil | Fresh parsley or fresh basil for garnish |
| 1 cup (about half of a medium bulb) fennel, chopped | |

In a medium-sized skillet, cook the bacon until crisp. Remove from the skillet and sauté the mushrooms in the bacon drippings for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the bacon and oil from the sun-dried tomatoes. Cover and set aside.

Heat the olive oil in an 11-inch sauté pan over medium heat. Add the fennel and garlic; cook, stirring occasionally, until the fennel starts to soften, about 5 minutes. Stir in ½ cup water, the cream, chicken broth, sun-dried tomatoes, red pepper flakes and 1 teaspoon salt. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer briskly, uncovered, until the tomatoes are plump and soft, about 10 to 15 minutes.

Let cool slightly, then puree in a blender until smooth. Wipe out the sauce pan and return the sauce to the pan; keep hot.

Meanwhile, bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil. Cook the rigatoni until just barely al dente. Drain well and return the pot. Add the sauce and toss over medium-low heat for 2 to 3 minutes so the pasta finishes cooking and absorbs some of the sauce. Season to taste.

Pour the pasta into a warm pasta dish. Top with the bacon/mushroom mixture and garnish with chopped parsley or thinly sliced basil. *Makes 8 side dishes*

Sun-Dried Tomato Butter

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| 2 tablespoons oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained, finely chopped | |
| ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened | ¼ teaspoon fresh rosemary, finely chopped |
| ½ teaspoon anchovy paste | ⅛ teaspoon salt |
| ½ teaspoon orange zest, finely grated | ⅛ teaspoon black pepper |

Pulse together all ingredients in a food processor until tomato is finely chopped and butter is pale pink. Transfer to sheet of waxed paper or parchment paper and roll into a log about 1½-inches thick. Twist ends of paper to enclose butter and chill until firm, about 30 minutes.

Sun-Dried Tomato and Corn Salad

4 cups corn (use fresh, frozen or canned)*
1 cup red sweet pepper, finely diced
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sweet onion, finely diced
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sun-dried tomatoes marinated in oil, slivered
2 tablespoons mayonnaise or plain yogurt

2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
2 tablespoons oil from marinated tomatoes
2 tablespoons parsley, chopped
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Combine the corn, sweet pepper, onion, tomatoes and parsley in a medium-sized salad bowl. In a small bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise or yogurt, vinegar and oil. Pour over the salad and toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper. Let stand for at least a few minutes to allow flavors to blend. This salad will hold for several hours in the refrigerator before serving.

Yield: 6 servings

*If using fresh corn, shuck the corn and blanch in boiling water for 1 minute. Rinse in cold water to stop the cooking and cut the kernels off the cob. If using frozen, thaw and drain. If using canned, drain.

Sun-Dried Tomato Chicken and Mushroom Sauté

4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shallots, diced
8 ounces mushrooms, sliced
1 sweet red pepper, diced
1 small zucchini, quartered and sliced
2 teaspoons fresh thyme or more to taste, divided

2 large chicken breasts, cut crosswise into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch strips
1 tablespoon white balsamic vinegar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sun-dried tomatoes marinated in oil, chopped
1 tablespoon of the oil from the tomatoes
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the shallots and mushrooms and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the sweet pepper, zucchini and 1 teaspoon thyme. Sauté the vegetables until barely tender, about 2 minutes. Remove from the skillet and keep warm.

Add the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil and heat over medium-high heat. Add the chicken and the remaining 1 teaspoon thyme; sauté until chicken is done, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove the chicken from skillet and add to the vegetables.

To the juices in the skillet, add the vinegar. Cook for 1 minute, stirring up any browned pieces clinging to the bottom of the skillet. Add the tomatoes and oil from the tomatoes. Return the chicken and vegetables to the skillet. Over medium low heat toss the chicken and vegetables together for 1 to 2 minutes to blend flavors. Season with salt and pepper. *Yield: 4 servings*

Sun-Dried Tomato-Onion Jam

3 medium onions, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced crosswise
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup granulated sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon kosher salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry white wine
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup packed dried apricots, thinly sliced
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup drained sun-dried tomatoes, chopped

Cook onions, butter, sugar, salt, pepper and red pepper flakes, covered in a 10-inch heavy skillet over low heat, stirring occasionally, until onions are soft and pale golden, about 30 minutes. Add wine, vinegar, apricots and tomatoes. Simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally, until thick, about 20 to 30 minutes. Serve at room temperature. *Makes 2 cups*



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