

# THE STORY OF GRANDMA MARTINO'S ITALIAN SAUCE



Since I was a little girl, I remember the luscious smell of my Grandma Martino's Italian Sauce cooking on the stove. When I was growing up, my family lived over 1,000 miles from Grandma and Grandpa Martino. But when my parents made the sauce from an unwritten recipe of Grandma Martino, it was one way to bring back the happy memories of her home and the incredible smells of her Italian kitchen. We always called it Grandma Martino's sauce. There was always a love for food and family in my home— just like in my Martino heritage. This is a little bit of the back story to that heritage.

Joseph Martino was a Sicilian immigrant to America in 1903. His parents were Andrew and Frances Martino. In Sicily, he was an apprentice to a violin maker and learned the trade there. He loved the violin, but never learned to play because the teacher told him that his fingers were too stubby. So, he settled on becoming a violin maker.



After coming to America, he was assimilated in the Italian community in NYC. He found work as a violin maker at various music supply houses, where he made and repaired violins, cellos, and violas. He lived in NYC in the early years after he came to America, and he moved to Boston, MA, Ithaca NY, and back to Boston, where he lived the rest of his life until his death in 1970.

Mary Angela Mazzaro came over from Naples, Italy as a 3-year old girl in 1908. Her parents were Antonio and Concetta Mazzaro and they were from the Campania region of Italy near Naples. Antonio had come to the US to find their new home, and his wife Concetta joined him in 1908 with their children. The Mazzaros settled in the Boston, MA area with other Italian immigrants in the North End of Boston and later they moved to the Somerville area with their 7 children.

Mary's brother Louie was a violinist and he went to Joseph Martino's music shop to order a violin. When Joseph delivered the finished product to Louie, he met Mary who was around 17 years old. He was very interested in Mary and after a short courtship, her parents gave their permission for them to marry. At their marriage in 1923, Mary was 18 and Joseph was 38. They made their home in the Boston area for most of their lives and had 5 children who were all brought up in the south shore area of Massachusetts. Joseph continued to make violins, but in 1942 during WWII, he started working the Boston shipyard and made violins on the side. He was a very accomplished violin maker and repairman.



**M**ary was an excellent cook and she learned to cook Italian food from her mother. When she got married her husband Joseph wanted her to adapt to cooking more Sicilian dishes and so she ultimately married the two cuisines. Her delicious Sicilian-Italian sauce (gravy) was always in a pot on her stove and she might adjust it a little with the meat or fish that she cooked with it. As with other Old-World Italian families, food and wine was always available in Mary's kitchen and was offered to all who visited with them.

**I**n the early 1950's, my Daddy (Sam) was stationed in Boston, Massachusetts while his ship was in port. He met my mother who was working in the city at the time, but she was from a small town on the south shore in Hingham, MA. Sam would visit



Frances at her home with her parents, Joseph and Mary Martino. Mary always had a pot of "gravy" cooking on the stove and she would make the most delectable Italian dishes. Sam was the cook for the Naval Officers aboard the USS Lewis Hancock. He got Mary to teach him how to make her Italian sauce so he could impress the officers with this new addition to his culinary repertoire. It was a huge hit and Daddy continued to learn from Mary while he was in the area.



**M**y parents married a year later. I was born a year after that. When my Daddy was discharged, they moved to his home in South Georgia. My sister Marie was born a year after that, and my youngest sister, Sandra was born 5 years later. We had a very happy life in South Georgia. We got to visit our Martino grandparents as often as possible, but the distance was an obstacle that made those visits infrequent. My Daddy was the main cook in our home and my mother was his assistant. He taught my sisters and me how to make Grandma's sauce. It was always a welcome treat in our home and we had many dinners with friends and family through the years where the featured dish was Grandma Martino's sauce. After I retired from my job in 2015, I started cooking a lot more for friends and most of them wanted Grandma's sauce. A couple years later, I decided to try to bottle it and sell it locally. So, this is the story of how Grandma Martino's Italian Sauce was reborn! I produce it in small batches and try to make sure all the basic cooking steps of this special recipe are followed. It is my joy to offer this product that is made with pride of the rich heritage it represents in a jar of sauce. I believe...

**LOVE + FOOD + FAMILY & FRIENDS = GRANDMA MARTINO'S ITALIAN SAUCE**



*Buon appetito!!*  
**Loretta Holmes**  
Saucy Tomato Company



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