

End-of-the-Season Roasted Tomato Sauce

Kathy's take: Roasting at a high temperature gives tomatoes a rich, slightly smoky flavor, and onions and garlic become sweet as they caramelize. For those with a fear of canning, this is a no-fail tomato sauce that can be refrigerated for three to five days, or it can be frozen in a tightly sealed plastic bag for several months. The sauce can also be placed in sterilized Mason jars and processed (30 minutes in a boiling water bath); it will keep for up to a year.

Toss the sauce with pasta, serve it over grilled chicken or fish, or in any dish that calls for regular tomato sauce. You can cut the recipe in half or make a huge batch, depending on how many tomatoes you have. Feel free to add pitted olives, drained capers, chopped sweet or hot peppers, anchovies, or any other fresh herbs you have on hand.

Recipe

About 10 pounds ripe tomatoes, any variety, cored and quartered*
8 medium onions, peeled, and quartered or chopped
5 garlic cloves, peeled, and left whole
5 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
1 cup chopped fresh herbs (rosemary, basil, thyme, oregano, parsley, and/or chives)
About 1/3 cup olive oil
1/2 teaspoon salt, or to taste
Generous grinding of black pepper
A few tablespoons sugar (optional)

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

In a large roasting pan, gently toss together the tomatoes, onions, whole and chopped garlic, herbs, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Roast for 25 minutes. Gently stir the vegetables. Roast for another 25 minutes and gently toss. Add any of the optional ingredients listed above and roast for another 45 minutes to an hour, or until the tomatoes have softened and somewhat broken down into a sauce, with a golden brown crust on top. Remove and taste for seasoning. If the sauce tastes bitter, add a few tablespoons of the sugar.

Let cool and place in clean, sterile jars, or tightly sealed plastic bags, and refrigerate, freeze, or can. If canning the jars, process for 30 to 35 minutes.

Makes about 10 to 12 cups.

**- I don't peel my tomatoes when I make this sauce because high temperature roasting produces a peel that is very edible. However if you truly dislike tomato peels, simply remove them by placing the tomatoes in a pot of boiling water for 60 seconds and immediately place them into a bowl of ice cold water. The peel will come off easily.*