

Simple Tomato Sauce

This basic tomato sauce can be easily doubled and frozen in two- or four-cup batches. After freezing it, you can use it as is or add your choice of vegetables, meat, or fresh herbs. Makes about 4 cups.

6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon minced garlic
3 pounds ripe plum tomatoes or a combination of plum and beefsteak, coarsely chopped (about 8 cups)
Sea salt

Heat oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add garlic, and cook 20 seconds (do not let brown). Stir in tomatoes and 2 teaspoons salt. Raise heat, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer vigorously, stirring frequently, until sauce has reduced and thickened slightly, 15 to 20 minutes. Sauce can be stored in airtight containers in the refrigerator for up to 3 days or in the freezer for up to 3 months.

Tomato & Butter Sauce

2 pounds fresh, ripe tomatoes, prepared as described below
5 tablespoons butter
1 medium onion, peeled and cut in half
Salt to taste

Put tomatoes in a saucepan, add the butter, onion, and salt, and cook uncovered at a very slow, but steady simmer for about 45 minutes, or until it is thickened to your liking and the fat floats free from the tomato. Stir from time to time, mashing up any large pieces of tomato with the back of a wooden spoon. Taste and correct for salt. Before tossing with pasta, you may remove the onion and save for another use, but many opt to leave it in. Serve with freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano cheese for the table. Serves 6.

Making Fresh Tomatoes Ready for Sauce

1. Plunge the tomatoes in boiling water for a minute or less. Drain them and, as soon as they are cool enough to handle, skin them, and cut them into coarse pieces.

Big Batch Roasted Sauce

8 pounds tomatoes, stemmed and quartered
1 head fresh garlic, peeled and cloves left whole
1/4 C Extra Virgin Olive oil
2 tsp sea salt

Combine ingredients in a roasting pan. Roast at 450°F for 1 1/2 to 2 hours, or until juices get thick. Tomatoes will get a bit blackened and will smell wonderful. Let cool, and run through a food mill to remove skins & seeds. I just use a hand blender. The resulting puree will be nice & thick; no need to reduce. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Measure into small freezer bags or plastic yogurt containers and freeze.

Note: I always use whatever tomatoes I have on hand. I feel that though juicy, the heritage types make the sweetest sauce. This sauce is rich and hearty. We use it alone as pizza sauce, or make soup by adding chicken broth or whole milk and a dash of cream. Sometimes, we make a rose sauce for pasta by adding a bit of cream. It makes fantastic spaghetti sauce. We like to add cooked sausage, mushrooms and peppers.