

Romesco Sauce

Swick

Makes 2 cups | Active Time: 20 minutes | Total Time: 40 minutes

Step 1: Roasting the Peppers

- 6 red bell peppers
- 1 to 2 tbsp olive oil (for roasting)
- 2 ripe tomatoes (optional)*

Preheat the oven to 450°F (230°C).

Lightly coat the peppers with a bit of oil. Place them onto a tray lined with foil. Roast, turning as needed until all sides are blistered and blackened. Keep an eye on them because you may need to rotate the tray to promote even roasting. Once the peppers are nicely charred and the skins have blistered, remove them from the oven and place into a bowl. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and let sit for about 10 minutes. This will help the peppers to sweat and their skins will loosen.

Once the peppers are cool enough to handle, peel and discard the skins and seeds from the peppers. Set the peppers aside while you gather the rest of your mise en place.

*Note: You can also roast a couple of tomatoes and purée them at the same time as the peppers, but this sauce is also very nice with the peppers alone. Also, you may want to strain and reserve any juice from the peppers and tomatoes, as the added liquid can make the sauce too thin.

Step 2: Preparing Your Mise en Place

- 1/3 cup raw almonds
- 1/4 cup hazelnuts
- 1 to 2 garlic cloves
- 1/4 tsp smoked paprika*
- 1/2 tsp hot paprika
- 1 1/2 tbsp sherry vinegar

With the oven set to 350°F (176°C). Roast the hazelnuts and almonds and set aside to cool. Once cool enough to handle, remove the skins from the hazelnuts. No need to do this for the almonds. Set aside.

Next, gather the garlic, paprika and sherry vinegar. *Note: You can use solely smoked paprika, but the heat from hot, smoked paprika gives the sauce a very nice, but gentle kick.

Step 3: Making the Romesco Sauce

- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 to 1 tsp sea salt

To make the sauce, first purée the garlic in a food processor. Next, add the nuts and grind until you reach the desired consistency. The finer you grind them, the smoother the sauce will be. You can also leave them a bit chunky for added texture.

Next, add the peppers (and tomatoes, if using) and purée until well combined. Then add the paprika, sherry vinegar and pulse a few times.

To finish, add the olive oil and seasoning and pulse again. Lastly, taste again adding more salt, vinegar and/or more spice, to taste. It should be rather bright with acidity. Transfer to a bowl and serve. This sauce will also keep well for a few days in the refrigerator.

Note: You can also prepare this sauce using a mortar and pestle.