

The Most Amazing Tomato Sauce

Swick

Makes 4 cups | Active Time: 40 minutes | Total Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Step 1: Preparing Your Mise en Place

- 1 cup garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 4 lbs ripe tomatoes, cut into eighths
- 3/4 cup olive oil*

*Note: This may seem like a lot of oil, but it is needed to fry the garlic. If the garlic is not fully submerged, it will not cook evenly and/or it could burn.

To slice the garlic, the easiest way to get it nice and thin is to use a mandolin or a sharp truffle slicer. Very carefully slice the garlic, leaving the end piece of each clove to use next time you make stock etc.

For the tomatoes, remove the core, cut in half and then cut into quarters.

Step 2: Cooking the Tomato Sauce

- sea salt, to taste
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste

To cook this particular tomato sauce, it is important that all of your mise en place is ready, as this sauce is all about timing.

To start, pour the olive oil into a large heavy-bottomed pot and add the garlic. Place the pot over medium-high heat. As the olive oil and garlic heat up, be sure that the tomatoes are ready and close by as they will need to be added as soon as the garlic has turned a light golden brown. The cold/room temperature tomatoes will help to momentarily stop the cooking process, which will prevent the garlic from burning.

As the garlic cooks in the oil, stir and/or gently swirl the pot to keep the garlic moving. It is important to keep a very close eye at this stage — you DO NOT want the garlic to cook unevenly and/or burn as this will produce a very bitter sauce.

As soon as the garlic reaches a nice light golden color, gently add the diced tomatoes. Be careful, as the tomatoes will splatter slightly as they hit the hot oil. Stir the tomatoes, to combine with the garlic. Let cook for approximately 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.

Once the tomatoes start to break down, you may need to stir more often.

Let this cook for anywhere from 30 minutes to 1+ hours. The amount of time the sauce will take to cook will vastly differ, depending on how high you have the heat, the water content in your tomatoes etc. Basically, the higher the heat, the quicker it will cook — and the more frequently it will need to be stirred. Also note that as the sauce cooks and thickens, it will also need to be stirred almost constantly. Alternatively, the heat can be turned down, to cook the sauce more slowly.

The sauce is almost done when you stir it and you start to see the bottom of the pot for a second or two. When done, the sauce should have a thick, almost tomato paste-like consistency. This rich thick sauce is what sticks so well to pasta.

Serve this sauce with your favorite pasta or use it as the base or serve alongside other delicious dishes, such as this Bolognese.

Chef's Notes

Thank you so very much to Avant Garden (in New York City) and chef Andrew D'Ambrosi for this amazing recipe. Here is a video of the chef making the sauce, courtesy of Fork+Plate.

Note this sauce goes well with any number of pastas — whichever one you choose, be sure to serve it with toasted bread crumbs. To make them, heat a large fry pan over medium heat and add about 1/4 cup of olive oil, followed by 1 to 1 1/2 cups of fresh bread crumbs. Stir constantly, until the breadcrumbs are golden brown — about 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. If desired, other seasoning such as parsley or oregano can also be added. To understand the magic of good bread crumbs, here's a good article called "Mighty Mighty Breadcrumbs".