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How to Make Homemade Chili Sauce - Easily! With Step-by-step Directions, Photos, Ingredients, Recipe and Costs

Yield: 6 pint jars



Making and canning your own Chili sauce from your own tomatoes and peppers is easy! Now, you can enjoy the homegrown tomato flavor and your own level of spice and heat by canning your own chili sauce!

Ingredients

- 4 quarts of chopped, peeled, cored tomatoes. Generally that requires about 8 quarts of fresh whole tomatoes, which is probably about 14 pounds.
- 2 cups of chopped onions (I like Vidalia's)
- 2 cups of chopped sweet red peppers - that's about 3 or 4 large peppers
- 1 hot red pepper, finely chopped. You can use chili peppers or your favorite type of hot pepper, like jalapeño, habaneras, Serrano, etc.. You can add two peppers, if you like it really hot. Be sure to finely dice (I use a blender).
- 1 cup of sugar. Or you can use 1 cup of honey instead. Diabetics may want to use 1 cup of Splenda instead.
- 3 Tablespoons salt (for flavoring; if you are on a low salt diet, you may reduce or eliminate the salt)



- 3 Tablespoons of mixed pickling spices. Most grocery stores sell this, either by the herbs and spices, or by the seasonal canning supplies.
- 1 Tablespoon of celery seed.
- 1 Tablespoon of mustard seed.
- : 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of clear (white) vinegar, 5% concentration.

Equipment

- **1 Water bath Canner** (a huge pot to sanitize the jars after filling (about \$30 to \$35 - \$30 at mall kitchen stores and local "big box" stores. Note: we sell many sizes and types of canners for all types of stoves and needs - see [canning supplies](#)). Tomatoes are on the border between the high-acid fruits that can be preserved in a boiling-water bath and the low-acid fruits, vegetables and meats that need pressure canning
- **1 large pot** (to scald the tomatoes, step 3) and **1 small pot** to sanitize the lids.
- **Spice bag** - Cheesecloth or a commercial spice bag. A piece of a clean T-shirt will work in a pinch.
- **Pint or quart canning jars** (Ball or Kerr jars can be found at Publix, Kroger, Safeway and local "big box" stores - about \$8 per dozen jars including the lids and rings). Be sure to get wide mouth jars to fit the pickles in! Pint size works best!
- **Lids** - thin, flat, round metal lids with a gum binder that seals them against the top of the jar. They may only be used once.
- **Rings** - metal bands that secure the lids to the jars. They may be reused many times.
- **Jar grabber** (to pick up the hot jars)
- **Lid lifter** (has a magnet to pick the lids out of the boiling water where you sanitize them. (\$2 at mall kitchen stores and local "big box" stores, but it's usually cheaper online from our affiliates)
- **Jar funnel** (\$3-Grocery stores, like Publix, Kroger and Safeway and local "big box" stores; sometimes even hardware stores)
- **Large spoons and ladles**

Directions - Step by Step, How to Make Home Canned Chili Sauce from Fresh Tomatoes

Step 1 - Selecting the tomatoes

It's fun to go pick your own and you can obviously get better quality tomatoes!

At right is a picture of tomatoes from my garden - they are so much better than anything from the grocery store. And if you don't have enough, a pick-your-own farm is the place to go! At right are 4 common varieties that will work:

	Top right:
Top left:	Lemon
Beefsteak	Boy,
	yellow
Bottom	Bottom
left:	right:
Roma,	Better
paste-	Boy
type	



The picture at right shows the best variety of tomato to use: Roma; also called paste tomatoes. They have fewer sides, thicker, meatier walls, and MUCH less water. And that means thicker sauce in less cooking time!

Also, you don't want mushy, bruised or rotten tomatoes! Here is some general tomato information that applies to almost all tomato canning recipes:



For thin sauce - An average of 35 pounds is needed per canner load of 7 quarts; an average of 21 pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints. A bushel weighs 53 pounds and yields 10 to 12 quarts of sauce-an average of 5 pounds per quart.

For thick sauce - An average of 46 pounds is needed per canner load of 7 quarts; an average of 28 pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints. A bushel weighs 53 pounds and yields 7 to 9 quarts of sauce-an average of 6½ pounds per quart.

Step 2 - Get the jars and lids sanitizing



The dishwasher is fine for the jars; especially if it has a "sanitize" cycle. I get that going while I'm preparing everything else, so it's done by the time I'm ready to fill the jars. If you don't have a dishwasher, submerge the jars in a large pot (the canner itself) of water and bring it to a boil.

Be sure to let it go through the rinse cycle to get rid of any soap!

Get the canner heating up

Fill the canner about 1/2 full of water and start it heating (with the lid on).

Start the water for the lids





Put the lids into the small pot of boiling water for at least several minutes. Note: everything gets sanitized in the water bath (step 7) anyway, so this just helps to ensure there is no spoilage later!

Step 3 - Removing the tomato skins

Here's a trick you may not know: put the tomatoes, a few at a time in a large pot of boiling water for no more than 1 minute (30 - 45 seconds is usually enough)



then....

Plunge them into a waiting bowl of ice water.

This makes the skins slide right off of the tomatoes! If you leave the skins in, they become tough and chewy in the sauce, not very pleasant.



Step 4 - Removing the skins, bruises and tough parts

The skins should practically slide off the tomatoes. Then you can cut the tomatoes in quarters and remove the tough part around the stem and any bruised or soft parts.



Why remove the skins? They become tough when you cook them! Some people use a juicer and then cook the resultant juice down. It takes more time, but there's nothing wrong with that approach.

Step 5 - Removing seeds and water

After you have peeled the skins off the tomatoes, cut the tomatoes in half. Now we need to remove the seeds and excess water.

Step 6 - Squeeze of the seeds and water

Just like it sounds: wash your hands then squeeze each tomato and use your finger or a spoon to scoop and shake out most of the seeds. You don't need to get fanatical about it; removing just most will do. Another way to do it is to cut each tomato in



half, across it, instead of lengthwise. Then just shake the seeds and juice out. Another way to do it is to cut each tomato in half, across it, instead of lengthwise. Then just shake the seeds and juice out.

Step 7 - Drain the tomatoes

Toss the squeezed (Squozen? :) tomatoes into a colander or drainer, while you work on others. This helps more of the water to drain off. You may want to save the liquid: if you then pass it through a sieve, screen or cheesecloth, you have fresh tomato juice; great to drink cold or use in cooking! By draining the water off now, you'll end up with a thicker chili sauce in less cooking time! And that preserves vitamins (and your sanity).



Step 8 - Chop the peppers and onions

You can manually chop the onions or peppers, or use an electric chopper. Except for the hot peppers, I chop to about 1/8 sized pieces or even smaller.



- 2 cups of chopped onions (I like Vidalia's)
- 2 cups of chopped sweet red 1 hot red pepper, finely chopped. You can use chili peppers or your favorite type of hot pepper, like jalapeño, habaneras, Serrano, etc.. You can add two peppers, if you like it really hot. Be sure to finely dice the hot peppers (I use a blender).

Step 9 - Combine the tomatoes and other ingredients in a large pot and bring the sauce to a gentle simmer for 45 minutes



Combine the

- tomatoes, and
- 2 cups chopped onions,
- 2 cups chopped sweet peppers,
- 1 hot finely chopped pepper
- 1 cup of sweetener (sugar, Splenda, honey) and
- salt (optional)

in a big pot. Simmer for 45 minutes in large-diameter pot. Take care to mind the heat and stir to avoid any burning.

Step 10 - Tie the spices in a spice bag and add.

Tie the

- 3 tablespoons of pickling spices,
- 1 Tablespoon of celery seed, and
- 1 Tablespoon of mustard seed

In the spice bag or a piece of cheesecloth and toss it into the simmering tomato mixture.

Step 11 - Simmer until the volume is reduce in half.

Boil until the volume is reduced by about one-third for thin sauce, or by one-half for thick sauce.

You don't need to overcook it; just bring it to boiling to sanitize it and cook down the tomatoes.

As they cook, the tomatoes will fall apart into sauce with out much need of mushing!

Step 12 - Add the vinegar and simmer again

Again simmer of low to medium heat until it reaches the thickness that you prefer! A crock pot (with the lid off or askew) works well for reducing volumes without burning.

Step 13 - Fill the jars with sauce

Remove the spice bag. Fill the jars to within $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch of the top, seat the lid and hand-tighten the ring around them.



NOTE: if you want to freeze the sauce instead, just fill your freezer containers (I like Ziploc freezer bags in the quart size), fill them completely, eliminate air pockets, seal them and pop them in the freezer. You're done!

Step 14 - Put the lids and rings on

Just screw them on snugly, not too tight. If there is any tomato on the surface of the lip of the jar, wipe it off first with a clean dry cloth or paper towel.

Be sure the contact surfaces (top of the jar and underside of the ring) are clean to get a good seal!



Step 15 - Boil the jars in the water bath canner

Put them in the canner and keep them covered with at least 1 inch of water. Keep the water boiling. Process the jars in a boiling-water bath for 15 minutes for pints and 8-ounce jars. Times have not been determined for larger sized jars. Remember to adjust the time if you are at a different altitude other than sea level! Pressure canners work better for tomato sauce and other low acid foods - you'll get less spoilage with a pressure canner.



I prefer a pressure canner as the higher temperatures and shorter cooking time result in better flavor and less spoilage. For more information or to order one, click on [Pressure Canners](#). The recipe and directions for pressure canning tomatoes are coming.

Recommended process time for **Chili Sauce** in a boiling water canner.

		Process Time at Altitudes of		
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Half-pints or smaller	15 min	20 min	25 min

Step 16 - Done

Lift the jars out of the water and let them cool without touching or bumping them in a draft-free place (usually takes overnight) You can then remove the rings if you like. Once the jars are cool, you can check that they are sealed verifying that the lid has been sucked down. Just press in the center, gently, with your finger. If it pops up and down (often making a popping sound), it is not sealed. If you put the jar in the refrigerator right away, you can still use it. Some people replace the lid and reprocess the jar, then that's a bit iffy. If you heat the contents back up, re-jar them (with a new lid) and the full time in the canner, it's usually ok.



Frequently Asked Questions about Canning Chili Sauce

Tips and Comments from Visitors

- **A visitor writes on August 20, 2009:** "I have a suggestion for your canning friends making tomato sauce. I put my tomatoes through a victorio strainer, which separates my skins and seeds from the pulp. No need to blanch and skin all done in 1 easy step. Then I put my sauce through a jelly bag to eliminate the water from the sauce and I don't have to boil as long to get to a thicker state. Then I process them in my canner. Hope this gets passed around."