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How to Make and Can Homemade Ketchup from Fresh Tomatoes - EASILY!

The super-easy version of homemade ketchup

Have you ever tried homemade ketchup? Did you know it tastes like TOMATOES??? Real ketchup (or catsup) is easy to make following this simple blender recipe - and all natural! You can even make it without added sugar or use Splenda instead - so whether you want to eliminate sugars for diabetic needs, calorie counting or want a natural homemade ketchup - this recipe is for you.

We take ketchup (or [catsup](#), if you prefer) for granted - it is everywhere and Americans use it in almost everything. Some even put it on scrambled eggs. So maybe you wondered if homemade ketchup taste any different or better? And if you have a mountain of homegrown tomatoes that are going to waste, here's your chance to make your own ketchup and customize to your own taste! Need a low-salt diet? Skip the salt! Want a spicy ketchup? Add some Tabasco or chilies. Making and canning your own ketchup is something families remember years later. No store bought ketchup compares with the taste of that made from your own tomatoes from your garden or fresh-picked from a local farm! In the middle of the winter, you can pour the ketchup on your food and taste the summer flavor of fresh tomatoes.

Here's how to do it, in easy steps and completely illustrated. This method is easy, ANYONE can do this; and is NOT time consuming - the tricks I've found are illustrated below - using a blender and a crockpot takes all the work and time out of it! It's a great thing to do with your kids!

You may also be interested in [How to make cucumber pickle relish!](#) This is the classic hamburger relish!

Ingredients

Yield: About 5 or 6 pints

- 12 lbs ripe tomatoes
- 1 lbs onions
- 1/2 lb sweet red peppers
- 1/2 lb sweet green peppers
- 4.5 cups vinegar (5 percent)
- 4.5 cups sugar OR Splenda OR any combination of the two... OR no sweetener at all, if that's what you like.
- 1/8 cup canning or pickling salt (again optional - if you are on a salt-restricted diet, you can omit this, it is not used as a preservative in this recipe)
- Spice bag or cheesecloth
- Spices (version 1)
 - 1 tablespoon dry mustard
 - 1/2 tablespoon ground red pepper
 - 1/2 teaspoon whole allspice
 - 1/2 tablespoon whole cloves
 - 1 stick cinnamon (3 inches long)
- Spices (version 2)
 - 1 tablespoon dry mustard
 - 1/2 tablespoon ground red pepper
 - 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
 - 1/2 tablespoon ground cloves
 - 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Equipment

- 1 blender - I purchased mine in 1976 (note the "harvest gold") for \$20 and it is still going strong, so at less than 70 cents per year, it's worth it!
- 1 crock pot - You can make it without one, and if you feel like standing there stirring for hours, be my guest. I can think of at least 5,676 other things I'd rather be doing.
- 1 Water bath canner (a huge pot to sterilize the jars after filling (about \$30 to \$35 - \$30 at mall kitchen stores, Wal-Mart. Note: we sell many sizes and types of canners for all types of stoves and needs through our reliable suppliers - 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. I have a pressure canner, so I use that just to make sure there's less spoilage, but a water bath canner will work.
- Food mill or sieve - Not required but it makes a nice, fast polishing step to remove any seeds and hard bits. Plus, you can use it to make applesauce, seedless jam and more. I highly recommend the Foley Food Mill - it's only about \$25. You can use an ordinary sieve, but it will take much longer.
- Pint or half-pint canning jars (Ball or Kerr jars can be found at Publix and Wal-Mart - about \$8 per dozen jars including the lids and rings).
- 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 sterilize them. (\$2 at Wal-Mart)
- 1 large pot.
- Large spoons and ladles
- Jar funnel (\$3-\$4 at Wal-Mart)

Process - How to Make Ketchup (or Catsup) 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-you-own farm is the place to go! Below are 4 common varieties that will work:



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



The picture at left shows the best variety of tomato to use: Roma; also called paste tomatoes. they have fewer sides, thicker, meatier walls, and less water.

Also, you don't want mushy, bruised or rotten tomatoes!

Step 2 - 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 3 - 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 4 - Prepare the peppers and onion

Remove seeds from peppers and slice into strips. Peel and quarter onions.



Step 5 - Start blending them, in 5 second batches



Blend tomatoes, peppers, and onions at high speed for 5 seconds in electric blender.

It will take a number of blenders-full to work your way through all the tomatoes, peppers and onions.

Step 6 - Heat to a boil



Just heat the tomato-peppers-onions mix to a boil,

And then simmer the tomatoes for about 1 hour over medium-low heat.

Step 7 - Add the seasoned vinegar and cook down to thicken the mix

Now it's time to add the

- 4.5 cups vinegar (5 percent)
- 4.5 cups sugar OR Splenda OR any combination of the two... OR no sweetener at all, if that's what you like.
- 1/8 cup canning or pickling salt (again optional - if you are on a salt-restricted diet, you can omit this, it is not used as a preservative in this recipe)



And add one of the two spice options -

- Spices (version 1) - tie these in a spice bag or cheesecloth
 - 1 tablespoon dry mustard
 - 1/2 tablespoon ground red pepper
 - 1/2 teaspoon whole allspice
 - 1/2 tablespoon whole cloves
 - 1 stick cinnamon (3 inches long)

OR

- Spices (version 2)
 - 1 tablespoon dry mustard
 - 1/2 tablespoon ground red pepper
 - 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
 - 1/2 tablespoon ground cloves
 - 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Continue cooking on low heat in the crockpot (OR standing over it, boiling and stirring) until volume is reduced one-half and ketchup rounds up on a spoon with no separation of liquid and solids.

I find it takes about 12 hours, but each crockpot may vary. You want it to get as thick as you like your ketchup, remembering that it will also thicken a little bit after you cool it. The photo doesn't show it, but I cover with a splatter screen or the lid on loosely (so the steam can escape)

Step 8 - Get the jars and lids sterilizing



The dishwasher is fine for the jars; especially if it has a "sterilize" cycle. I get that going about 30 minutes before I figure the ketchup has cooked down enough (yes, that's a bit vague!)

Be sure to let it go through the rinse cycle to get rid of any soap! It's also a good time to start heating up the water in the canner and the small pan of water to boil the lids.

Lids: Put the lids into a pan of boiling water for at least several minutes.

Note: everything gets sterilized in the water bath (step 12), so this just helps to ensure there is no spoilage later!)

Step 9 - Fill the jars with the ketchup and put the lid and rings on



Fill them to within ¼-inch of the top, seat the lid and hand-tighten

the ring around them.



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

Step 10 - Process (boil) the jars in the 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 half-pints and pints. Remember to adjust the time if you are at a different altitude other than sea level!

If you have a pressure canner, be sure to follow their directions.



Recommended process time for Blender Ketchup in a boiling-water canner.

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

Step 11 - 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.



Other Equipment:

From left to right:

1. Jar lifting tongs
to pick up hot jars
2. Lid lifter
- to remove lids from the
pot
of boiling water (sterilizing
)
3. Lid
- disposable - you may only
use them once
4. Ring
- holds the lids on the jar until after
the jars cool - then you don't need them
5. Canning jar funnel
- to fill the jars



Summary - Cost of Making Homemade Ketchup - makes 7 - 8 oz jars*				
Item	Quantity	Cost in 2008	Source	Subtotal
Tomatoes	25 lbs (to make about 16 cups of prepared tomato)	free from the garden, or \$0.50 cents at a PYO	Garden	\$0.00
Canning jars (8 oz size, wide mouth), includes lids and rings	7 jars	\$6.50/dozen	Wal-Mart, BigLots, Publix, Kroger	\$3.50
seasoning	See step 7	\$1.00? assuming you already have them. just the fraction you will use.	Wal-Mart, Publix, Kroger	\$1.00
Total				\$4.50 total or about \$0.65 per jar INCLUDING the jars - which you can reuse!
* - This assumes you already have the pots, pans, ladles, and reusable equipment. Note that you can reuse the jars!				