

Multi Purpose Tomato Sauce

This Multi Purpose Tomato Sauce is fabulous spread over a pizza base, poured over a pile of meatballs, stirred through pasta or added to a marinara mix. It's also a great base for winter stews and casseroles. Add a little tabasco sauce and a few juiced vegetables, and you've got your own homemade V8 juice!!



Multi Purpose Tomato Sauce



I almost always make my tomato sauce using store bought jars of tomato puree or passata.

Passata is tomato puree made by cooking and straining tomatoes. It can be easily found in supermarkets or delicatessens in Australia and is relatively inexpensive. There are different brands of passata and they vary in terms of salt and sugar content.

I choose to use passata rather than tinned whole or diced tomatoes to make my sauce because of its consistency, smooth texture and deeper flavour.

As it's already quite thick and rich, it feels like most of the work has already been done before I even start cooking.



To create my sauce, I cook out the 'rawness' of the tomato puree by simmering it gently for about 20 – 30 minutes with 1 1/2 cups of chicken stock or water. There are 2 reasons I add the extra liquid 1. the simmering process reduces the sauce, so without the extra liquid the tomato sauce would be far too thick 2. it creates an even deeper, richer flavour. For even more layers of flavour, add dried herbs such as oregano, basil and fresh bay leaves.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Makes: 2 – 2 1/2 cups

Ingredients

- 2 cups tomato puree (passata) (Note 1)
 - 1 1/2 cups chicken stock or water (Note 2)
 - 3 – 4 garlic cloves (grated or minced)
 - 3 tbsp olive oil
 - 1/2 tsp of each, dried basil & oregano (optional)
 - 2 fresh bay leaves (optional) (Note 3)
 - salt & pepper to taste
-

Instructions

1. Heat the olive oil in a medium saucepan over low – medium heat.
2. Add the garlic and saute until you can smell the aroma of garlic. This should take about a minute. Watch it carefully as you don't want the garlic to burn.
3. Pour in the passata, chicken stock and herbs (if desired) and stir.
4. Add salt and pepper to taste. Stir. I usually add about 1/2 tsp of black pepper and a full teaspoon of salt. You may need to adjust to your own liking.
5. Simmer gently uncovered for 20 minutes.

Notes

1. Passata is simply tomatoes that have been cooked and strained. It's my preference over tinned whole or diced tomatoes as I like the smooth texture and it really takes next to no time to create a deeply flavoured, rich sauce.
2. I use a good quality powdered chicken stock. It's convenient and easy to control the intensity of the flavour. I have recommended adding 1 1/2 cups of chicken stock to the mixture. Adjust the amount of chicken stock or water you add to create a consistency that you prefer. I find that simmering for 20 minutes is a perfect amount of time to allow the sauce to develop a rich flavour. Remember, the **longer** you simmer the **thicker** and **richer** it becomes!
3. Crush the bay leaves in your hand to release their fragrance before adding them.

A basic, Multi Purpose Tomato Sauce that's versatile and easy to prepare is really an essential in any-one's repertoire. It also freezes well if you happen to have any left over!!

Danielle