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How to Freeze Tomatoes From Your Garden

Freezing home grown or farm fresh tomatoes for use in winter cooking is very easy to do! The flavor of spaghetti sauce, lasagna, and salsas you make then will be superior to those made from canned tomatoes or store bought so called "fresh" tomatoes.

Here's how to do it, in easy steps and completely illustrated. This method is so easy, ANYONE can do this! It's a great thing to do with your kids! If you'd rather can your tomatoes, [see this page for canning directions for tomatoes!](#)

Ingredients and Equipment

- **Tomatoes** - any quantity, ripe, but not over ripe, still firm.
- Vacuum food sealer or plastic freezer bags, such as Ziploc freezer bags.
- 1 large pot
- Large slotted spoon
- Ice (10 lbs)

Process - How to Make Spaghetti 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-you-own farm is the place to go! Below are 4 common varieties that will work:

Top left: Beefsteak

Bottom left: Roma, paste-type

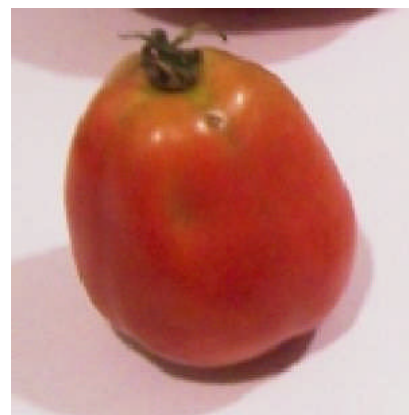
Top right: Lemon Boy, yellow

Bottom right: Better Boy



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 less water. And that means thicker sauce in less cooking time!

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 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.

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

Note: why remove the skins? They become tough and discolored in storage. You wouldn't want to eat them!

Step 4 - 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.

Here are before



and after photos:



Step 5 - 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 spaghetti sauce in less cooking time! And that preserves vitamins (and your sanity).

Step 6 - Fill the freezer bags

Don't overfill the bags, leave a little room for expansion. Do try to avoid leaving any air pockets! A vacuum bag is shown at left, but you can use ziploc (or similar) bags, show below. But be sure to squeeze out the extra air (below left is before, below right



is after squeezing out the excess air)

Step 7 - Vacuum seal the bags (if you have a vacuum sealer)



Obviously if you haven't got a vacuum food sealer, just inspect the bags and you may need to open them and reseal them to eliminate any air pockets!

Step 8 - Freeze the bags



Pop them into the freezer (on the quick freeze shelf, if you have one). Now leave them for 2 or 3 hours till frozen.

Put them in the back (coldest part) of your freezer

Now wait for a cold, dreary winter night to make some fresh-tasting spaghetti sauce!

