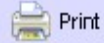


PickYourOwn.org

Where you can find a pick-your-own farm near you!

Click on the printer icon that looks like this:  (at the top left, to the right of "save a copy") to print!
See www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm for many other canning directions and recipes

Making and Canning Homemade Barbecue Sauce from Fresh Tomatoes!

Barbecue sauce is a treasured condiment to many folks. There are many types of bbq sauces, from the vinegar-based North Carolina sauce to the sweet, tomato-based Memphis sauces, and mustard-based sauces of south Georgia.. and many others. Perhaps you even have you own secret family recipe for making barbecue sauce?

And if you have a mountain of homegrown tomatoes that are going to waste, here's your chance to make your own barbecue sauce and customize to your own taste, can and use all year or give away as presents!

- Need a low-salt diet? Skip the salt!
- Prefer a honey BBQ sauce? Substitute honey for brown sugar!
- Want a spicy barbecue sauce? Add some Tabasco or chilies.
- Need a sugar-free BBQ sauce? Substitute Splenda for brown sugar!
- Here's how to do it, in easy steps and completely illustrated. This method is easy, and by using a crockpot to cook the tomatoes down, you can make it with much less effort! It's a great thing to do with your kids!

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

Ingredients

Yield: About 4 pint jars or 8 oz jars

- Tomatoes - 4 quarts (16 cups) peeled, cored, chopped red ripe tomatoes (about 24 large tomatoes) which is approximately about 15 lbs (yes, you need a big basketful - you remove the skins, seeds and a lot of the water, and then cook it down, so it takes a lot to start - UNLESS you are using a paste type tomato that has little water - you can get by with 18 lbs of those.) You could also start with 4 quarts of canned tomatoes (whole or dice, drained) or 3 quarts of canned tomato sauce.
- 2 cups chopped celery
- 2 cups chopped onions
- 1½ cups chopped sweet red or green peppers (about 3 medium peppers)
- 2 hot red peppers, cored, and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon black pepper, ground
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon dry mustard
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon canning salt
- 1 teaspoon hot pepper sauce (like, Tabasco®)
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1½ cups of (5%) vinegar (white apple or red wine)

Equipment

- Food mill or sieve - I highly recommend the Foley Food Mill - it's only about \$25. You can use an ordinary sieve, but it will take much longer. Other sieves and strainers, like Villaware, Roma, etc, work, too.
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- **1 Water bath canner** (a huge pot to sterilize 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. I have a pressure canner, so I use that just to make sure there's less spoilage, but a water bath canner will work.
- **Pint or half-pint 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).
- **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 mall kitchen stores and local "big box" stores, but it's usually cheaper online from our affiliates)
- **1 large pot.**
- **1 saucepan**
- **Large spoons and ladles**
- **Jar funnel** (\$3-Grocery stores, like Publix, Kroger and Safeway and local "big box" stores; sometimes even hardware stores)

Process - How to Make Barbecue 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! If you are starting with canned tomatoes or tomato sauce, skip to step 7.

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
Top right: Lemon Boy, yellow

Bottom left: Roma, paste-type
Bottom right: 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 - 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 barbecue sauce 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 3 - Removing the tomato skins (Optional)

I generally remove the skins first if the skins are nasty looking OR if I have any doubt as to whether pesticides were used because they are usually concentrated in the skins. Otherwise, you can skip to step 3.

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!

Step 4 - Removing most of the seeds and water

After you have peeled the skins off the tomatoes (or not, if you decided to leave the skins on), cut the tomatoes in half and cut out the woody part near the stem, and any bruised areas. Now we need to remove the seeds and excess water. Why do this? Getting rid of excess water will reduce cooking time later. And it eliminates the need to strain the sauce.



Step 5 - 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.



Step 6 - 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!



Step 7 - Prepare the seasonings

Prepare the following and dump them all together in a bowl:

- 2 cups chopped celery
- 2 cups chopped onions
- 1½ cups chopped sweet red or green peppers (about 3 medium peppers)
- 2 hot red peppers, cored, and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed or minced



Variations: as long as you keep the proportions consistent with the above, you can do some substitution, if your family recipe calls for garlic, or other similar vegetables.

Step 8 - Start the tomatoes simmering in a large pot

Put the tomatoes in a large pot to start simmering.

Step 9. Add the Seasonings

Into the pot of simmering tomatoes, add:

- The seasonings from step 6
- 1 teaspoon black pepper, ground
- 1 cup brown sugar (or honey, if you prefer - or Splenda if you are diabetic)
- 1 tablespoon dry mustard
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon canning salt (optional - I don't put any in!)
- 1 teaspoon hot pepper sauce (like, Tabasco®)
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1½ cups of (5%) vinegar (white apple or red wine vinegar)



Increase the black pepper, cayenne pepper, paprika and / or hot sauce if you want a hotter barbecue sauce. And again, if your family recipe calls for other herbs or spices, go ahead and substitute. As long as it doesn't substantially change the overall total quantity of herbs/spices, it shouldn't affect the safety of the canning process.

Step 10 - Bring the tomatoes to a gentle simmer for 30 minutes

Cook until vegetables are soft (about 30 minutes). This helps to separate the seeds and skins, and soften the vegetables to be sieved or pureed.



Step 11 - Removing the seeds and skins



Run the cooked tomato mixture through the food mill or sieve OR puree it all together in a blender or food processor. Discard any seeds and skins that remain in the sieve..

The food mill has the advantage of removing skins and seeds if you didn't do so earlier (in step 2), but if you use the blender or food processor, you'll get slightly more per batch.

Step 12 - Cook down to thicken the mix

Cook the mixture until it is reduced to the thickness that you like! On average, that would be about one half the volume, which would take about 2 or 3 hours on cooking and stirring on the stove over medium-low heat.

You can do it on the stove over low - medium heat, stirring frequently, as shown at right.. OR....





.. put it into a crockpot and let it cook down by itself. this method is much easier! I find it takes about 3 hours, but each crockpot may vary. You want it to get as thick as you like your barbecue sauce, 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). You need only come by and stir once every 30 minutes or so.

Step 13 - Fill the jars with the barbecue sauce and put the lid and rings on

Fill them to within $\frac{1}{4}$ -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 14 - 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 35 minutes for pints and 40 minutes for quarts. Remember to adjust the time if you are at a different altitude other than sea level!

Recommended process time for Barbecue Sauce in a boiling water canner.

Hot Pack Method		Process Time at Altitudes of		
Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 3,000 ft	3,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Half-pints or Pints	20 min	25 min	30 min	35 min

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



The USDA and Ball Blue book both include only directions for a water bath canner, no pressure canning information. If for some reason you want to pressure can it, doing the same duration ought to work. Process the sauce for 20 minutes for pint jars and 25 minutes for quarts, at a pressure of 10 to 11 pounds. I prefer a pressure canner or a larger 33 quarter water bath canner, shown above - both are much deeper, so there is no mess, no boilovers, and allows you to cover the tallest jars with several inches of water to ensure safety! To order one, click on [Canning supplies](#) and select the canner that is right for your stove (regular or flat bottomed for glass or ceramic stoves)

Step 15 - 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 Barbecue Sauce - makes 7 - 8 oz jars*

Item	Quantity	Cost in 2007	Source	Subtotal
Tomatoes	25 lbs (to make about 16 cups of prepared tomato)	"free" from the garden, or \$0.50 cents/lb at a PYO	Garden	\$0.00
Canning jars (8 oz size, wide mouth), includes lids and rings	7 jars	\$7.00/dozen	Grocery stores, like Publix, Kroger and Safeway and local "big box" stores; sometimes Big Lots and even hardware stores	\$4.50
seasoning	See step 7	\$1.00? assuming you already have them. just the fraction you will use.	Grocery stores, like Publix, Kroger and Safeway and local "big box" stores	\$1.00
Celery, onion, pepper	about 2 cups each	\$3.00	Grocery stores, like Publix, Kroger and Safeway and local "big box" stores	\$3.00
Total			\$8.50 total or about \$2.13 per pint 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!