

Canning Standard Tomato Sauce

A plain tomato sauce made by cooking down fresh tomato juice, acidified and canned in pints or quarts.

What you need

Sauce	Per quart	Canner load of 7 quarts	Canner load of 9 pints	Per bushel (53 lb)
Thin	about 5 lb tomatoes	about 35 lb	about 21 lb	10 to 12 quarts
Thick	about 6½ lb tomatoes	about 46 lb	about 28 lb	7 to 9 quarts

Per jar, you also need acid (required) and, if you like, 1 teaspoon of salt per quart:

Jar	Bottled lemon juice	or citric acid
Quart	2 tablespoons	½ teaspoon
Pint	1 tablespoon	¼ teaspoon

Use bottled lemon juice, never fresh. Acid is required for every processing method, including pressure canning.

Steps

- 1. Prepare.** Wash tomatoes, remove stems, and trim off bruised or discolored portions.
- 2. Hot break.** Quickly cut about 1 pound of tomatoes into quarters and put them directly into a saucepan. Heat immediately to boiling while crushing. Keep slowly adding and crushing freshly cut quarters, making sure the mixture boils constantly and vigorously. This keeps the sauce from separating.
- 3. Simmer.** Simmer 5 minutes after all the pieces are added.
- 4. Press.** Run the hot mixture through a food mill or sieve to remove skins and seeds.
- 5. Reduce.** Simmer in a large-diameter saucepan until the sauce reaches the consistency you want: reduce the volume by about one-third for thin sauce, or by one-half for thick sauce.
- 6. Acidify.** Add bottled lemon juice or citric acid to each jar, plus salt if desired.
- 7. Fill.** Fill jars with hot sauce, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process using a table below.

Processing times

All times are for a hot pack. Pick one method and use the column for your elevation.

Boiling-water canner

Jar	0 to 1,000 ft	1,001 to 3,000 ft	3,001 to 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Pints	35 min	40 min	45 min	50 min
Quarts	40 min	45 min	50 min	55 min

Dial-gauge pressure canner (pints or quarts)

Process time	0 to 2,000 ft	2,001 to 4,000 ft	4,001 to 6,000 ft	6,001 to 8,000 ft
20 min	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	9 lb
15 min	11 lb	12 lb	13 lb	14 lb

Weighted-gauge pressure canner (pints or quarts)

Process time	0 to 1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
20 min	5 lb	10 lb
15 min	10 lb	15 lb
10 min	15 lb	Not recommended

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation, Standard Tomato Sauce and Tomato Juice directions (nchfp.uga.edu), adapted from the USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning, revised 2015.