

- Prep Time: 45 minutes
 - Cook Time: 45 minutes
 - Canning Time: 45 minutes (varies by altitude)
 - Total Time: Approx. 2 hours 15 minutes
 - Yield: 6 to 7 Pint Jars (or 3 to 4 Quart Jars)
 - Method: Water Bath Canning
 - Difficulty: Intermediate
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📄 Ingredients

The Produce

- 10 lbs (approx. 4.5 kg) ripe tomatoes: Roma or plum tomatoes are best as they have lower water content and firmer flesh, but any ripe tomato works.
- 2 large onions: Yellow or white, finely chopped.
- 1 large green bell pepper: Finely chopped (optional, but adds great flavor).
- 4 cloves garlic: Minced.

The Seasoning

- 2 tsp Salt: Canning/pickling salt is recommended (do not use iodized table salt as it can cloud the liquid).
- 1 tsp Black Pepper: Freshly ground.
- 1 tbsp Granulated Sugar: Optional, to balance acidity.

- 1 tbsp Lemon Juice or Bottled Lemon Juice: *Crucial for acidity*. Do not use fresh lemon juice for canning; bottled is standardized for pH. (Use 1 tbsp per pint or 2 tbsp per quart).

Equipment Needed

- Water bath canner with rack
- Pint or Quart glass Mason jars (sterilized)
- New lids and screw bands
- Jar lifter and lid wand
- Bubble popper/headspace tool
- Large stainless steel pot (non-reactive)
- Slotted spoon

Instructions

Step 1: Prepare the Jars and Canner

1. Sterilize: Wash jars in hot, soapy water. Keep them hot in the dishwasher or a pot of simmering water until ready to use.
2. Heat Water: Fill your water bath canner halfway with water and bring it to a simmer (180°F). You will need enough water to cover the jars by 1-2 inches once they are placed inside.

Step 2: Peel the Tomatoes

The Ice Bath Method:

1. Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil.
2. Fill a large bowl with ice water.
3. Core the tomatoes and cut a small "X" into the bottom of each skin.
4. Drop tomatoes into the boiling water for 30-60 seconds (until skins start to split).
5. Transfer immediately to the ice bath.
6. Once cool enough to handle, the skins will slip right off.

Step 3: Chop and Sauté

1. Quarter the peeled tomatoes. If you prefer a thicker stew, squeeze out some of the seeds and excess juice (save this for tomato sauce!).
2. In a large, non-reactive pot (stainless steel or enamel), sauté the onions and bell pepper in a little olive oil until soft, about 5 minutes.
3. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute until fragrant.
4. Add the tomatoes, salt, pepper, and sugar (if using).
5. Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking.

Step 4: Simmer

1. Simmer the mixture for 20 to 30 minutes until the tomatoes are tender and the liquid has reduced slightly. You want a “stew” consistency, but remember it will thicken slightly as it cools. Do not overcook; the tomatoes should still hold their shape.

Step 5: Acidify and Pack

1. Add 1 tablespoon of bottled lemon juice to each pint jar (or 2 tbsp for quart jars). This ensures the pH is safe for shelf-stable storage.

2. Using a slotted spoon, pack the hot tomato mixture into the hot jars, leaving ½ inch of headspace.
3. Ladle the hot cooking liquid over the tomatoes to cover them, maintaining the ½ inch headspace.
4. Use a bubble popper tool to remove air bubbles.
5. Wipe the rim of the jar with a clean, damp cloth to ensure a good seal.
6. Center the lid on the jar and apply the screw band until “fingertip tight.”

Step 6: Process (Water Bath)

1. Place the filled jars onto the rack in the canner. Ensure the jars are not touching.
2. Lower the rack into the water. Ensure the water covers the jars by at least 1 inch. Add boiling water if necessary.
3. Bring to a rolling boil.
4. Start your timer once the water is boiling.
 - Pint Jars: Process for 40 minutes.

- Quart Jars: Process for 45 minutes.
- *Note: Adjust for altitude. Add 5 minutes for 1,001–3,000 ft, 10 minutes for 3,001–6,000 ft, and 15 minutes for above 6,000 ft.*

5. When time is up, turn off the heat and remove the canner lid. Wait 5 minutes before removing jars to stabilize pressure.

Step 7: Cool and Store

1. Use a jar lifter to carefully remove the jars and place them on a towel-lined counter.
2. Let them cool undisturbed for 12–24 hours.
3. Check the seals: Press the center of the lid; it should not pop up and down. If any jars did not seal, refrigerate them and use within a week.
4. Remove screw bands, label jars, and store in a cool, dark place.

□ Nutrition Information

Estimated per serving (1/2 cup serving, based on 6 pints)

- Calories: 45
- Total Fat: 0.2g
- Saturated Fat: 0g
- Sodium: 150mg (varies based on salt added)
- Total Carbohydrates: 8g
- Dietary Fiber: 1.5g
- Total Sugars: 5g (natural tomato sugars)
- Protein: 1g
- Vitamin C: 20% Daily Value
- Vitamin A: 10% Daily Value