

Prep Time	45 minutes
Cook & Blanch Time	25 minutes
Processing Time	85 minutes (Pints: 85 min / Quarts: 85 min at sea level)
Total Active Time	2 hours 35 minutes
Recipe Intensity	Medium (Requires basic canning safety and timing accuracy)
Preservation Shelf Life	12 to 18 months in a cool, dark place

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Equipment Needed

- Water-Bath Canner or a large stockpot with a fitted processing rack
- 7 Mason Jars (Quart size) with brand-new lids and clean screw bands
- Jar lifter, canning funnel, and bubble remover/headspace tool
- Large blanching pot and a large bowl for an ice bath

- Slotted spoon, clean dish towels, and kitchen timer

Ingredients

- 14 to 15 lbs (6.5 to 7 kg) ripe Plum or Roma tomatoes (*Note: Firm, disease-free tomatoes work best for whole preservation*)
- Bottled Lemon Juice (or USP grade Citric Acid):
 - 2 tablespoons bottled lemon juice per quart jar (*or 1/2 teaspoon citric acid per quart jar*)
 - 1 tablespoon bottled lemon juice per pint jar (*or 1/4 teaspoon citric acid per pint jar*)
- Canning or Sea Salt (Optional, for flavor only):
 - 1 teaspoon per quart jar
 - 1/2 teaspoon per pint jar
- Boiling Water (or fresh tomato juice pressed from extra tomatoes)

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Sterilize Jars and Prepare Equipment: Prerequisite Safety Step.

Inspect 7 quart jars for any nicks or cracks. Wash jars, lids, and bands in hot, soapy water and rinse thoroughly. Submerge the jars in your water-bath canner filled with water, bring to a gentle simmer (180°F / 82°C), and keep warm until ready to pack. Place new lids in a small bowl of hot water to soften the sealing gasket.

2. Blanch and Peel the Tomatoes: Timing: 10–15 minutes.

Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil and prepare a large ice bath nearby. Wash the tomatoes under cold water. Score a small, shallow “X” on the bottom of each tomato. Submerge tomatoes in batches into the boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds until the skins start to crack. Transfer immediately to the ice bath using a slotted spoon. Once cooled, slip off the skins and trim out the stem core.

3. Acidify the Jars: Critical Safety Step.

Remove heated jars from the water bath using your jar lifter and place them on a towel-lined counter. Before adding tomatoes, add the acidifying agent directly to each quart jar:

- 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice (or 1/2 teaspoon of citric acid).
- Add 1 teaspoon of canning salt per jar if desired.

Note: Bottled lemon juice guarantees a standard 4.6 or lower pH level essential for safe water-bath processing.

4. Pack the Jars: Intensity: Medium.

Pack the peeled, whole (or halved) tomatoes tightly into the acidified jars, pressing down

gently so tomato juice fills the spaces between them. Pour boiling water or heated tomato juice over the tomatoes, leaving exactly 1/2 inch of headspace at the top of each jar.

5. Debubble, Wipe Rims, and Cap: Timing: 5 minutes.

Insert a non-metallic bubble remover tool down the inside edge of each jar to release trapped air bubbles. Re-check and adjust headspace to 1/2 inch if needed. Dip a clean paper towel in warm water (or vinegar) and thoroughly wipe the rim of each jar to remove seeds or residue. Place a lid on each jar and screw the band down until fingertip-tight (do not overtighten).

6. Water-Bath Processing: Timing: 85 minutes.

Lower the filled jars carefully into the boiling water-bath canner using a jar lifter. Ensure the water level covers the tops of the jar lids by at least 1 to 2 inches. Cover the pot with a lid and bring the water back to a full rolling boil. Once boiling, set a timer for 85 minutes (adjust for altitude if needed).

7. Cooling and Storage: Resting Time: 12–24 hours.

When the timer finishes, turn off the heat, remove the lid, and let the jars sit in the hot water for 5 minutes. Carefully lift the jars out straight up without tilting them, placing them on a clean towel spaced an inch apart. Allow the jars to cool undisturbed for 12 to 24 hours. You will hear a popping sound as the lids seal down.

Quality Checks & Storage Instructions

Testing the Seal

After 12 to 24 hours, test the jar seals by pressing down on the middle of each lid:

- **Sealed:** The lid stays flat and depressed with no flex or click sound. Unfasten the screw bands; the lid should hold firmly.

- Unsealed: If a lid clicks or pops back up when pressed, the jar did not seal. Refrigerate immediately and consume within 7 days, or process again within 24 hours with a clean jar and fresh lid.

Shelf Life & Storage

Label sealed jars with the recipe name and processing date. Store in a cool, dark, dry pantry between 50°F and 70°F (10°C to 21°C). Properly processed home-canned tomatoes maintain optimal quality and flavor for 12 to 18 months. Once opened, store in the refrigerator and use within 5 to 7 days.

Nutritional Information

Values are calculated per 1 cup (240g) serving of home-canned whole tomatoes (without added salt).

Nutrient	Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value*
Calories	41 kcal	—
Total Fat	0.4 g	1%
<i>Saturated Fat</i>	0.1 g	0%
<i>Trans Fat</i>	0.0 g	—
Cholesterol	0 mg	0%
Sodium	12 mg	1% <i>(excluding added salt)</i>
Total Carbohydrates	9.0 g	3%
<i>Dietary Fiber</i>	2.5 g	9%
<i>Total Sugars</i>	6.0 g	—
Protein	2.0 g	4%
Vitamin C	31 mg	34%
Vitamin A	1020 IU	20%
Potassium	520 mg	11%
Calcium	24 mg	2%
Iron	0.8 mg	4%

