

- Prep Time: 45 minutes
- Cook/Simmer Time: 20 minutes
- Water Bath Processing Time: 35 minutes (pints) / 45 minutes (quarts)
- Cooling Time: 12-24 hours
- Total Time: Approx. 2 hours (active) + 12 hours cooling
- Yield: Approximately 4 quarts or 8 pints
- Difficulty: Intermediate

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Cooking Intensities & Heat Levels

- Blanching Intensity: High Boiling Heat (212°F / 100°C)
- Ice Bath Intensity: Freezing Cold (32°F – 40°F)
- Tomato Simmer Intensity: Medium-Low Heat (Gentle bubble)
- Jar Sterilization/Preheating Intensity: Medium Heat (180°F hot water)
- Water Bath Processing Intensity: Full Rolling Boil (212°F continuously covered)

Equipment Needed

- Water Bath Canner with canning rack
- 4 Quart or 8 Pint Mason Jars with new lids and screw bands
- Jar Lifter and Canning Funnel
- Bubble Remover / Headspace Tool
- Large Stainless Steel Stockpot

- Slotted Spoon and large mixing bowls

Ingredients

Primary Ingredients

- 14–16 lbs (6.5–7.2 kg) Fresh Tomatoes (Plum or Roma varieties recommended for thicker juice and higher flesh-to-seed ratio)

Acidification (Mandatory per jar for safety)

- For Quart Jars: 2 tbsp Bottled Lemon Juice *OR* ½ tsp Citric Acid per jar
- For Pint Jars: 1 tbsp Bottled Lemon Juice *OR* ¼ tsp Citric Acid per jar

Optional Flavor Enhancement (Per jar)

- Canning Salt: 1 tsp per quart jar (½ tsp per pint jar)

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Sterilize Jars and Preheat Canner: Prepare jars and sterilize canning station.

Wash glass jars, flat lids, and rings in warm, soapy water. Place jars into your water bath canner filled with warm water and heat over medium heat to around 180°F (82°C) to keep

them warm. Never put hot food into cold jars to prevent thermal shock breakage.

2. Blanch and Peel Tomatoes: High boiling heat (212°F / 100°C).

Cut a small "X" on the bottom of each tomato. Working in batches, drop tomatoes into boiling water for 30–60 seconds until skins split. Transfer immediately with a slotted spoon into an ice bath. Once cool enough to handle, slip off the skins and core the tomatoes.

3. Crush and Simmer: Medium-Low Heat.

Quarter 1/6th of your peeled tomatoes and place them in your large stockpot. Crushing them with a potato masher releases juice. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Gradually add remaining quartered tomatoes while stirring; the hot liquid prevents floating. Simmer gently for 5 minutes.

4. Acidify and Fill Jars: Critical food safety step.

Add bottled lemon juice (2 tbsp per quart) or citric acid directly to each hot, empty jar. Add canning salt if using. Ladle hot crushed tomatoes into jars using a funnel, leaving ½-inch headspace at the top.

5. Debubble and Seal Jars: Maintain exact headspace.

Run a plastic bubble remover or spatula around the inside edge of each jar to release trapped air pockets. Wipe the jar rims clean with a damp paper towel to ensure a proper seal. Place flat lids on top and screw bands on until fingertip-tight.

6. Process in Water Bath Canner: Full rolling boil continuously.

Use a jar lifter to lower filled jars into the boiling water bath canner. Water must cover jars by at least 1–2 inches. Cover with lid and bring to a rolling boil. Process pint jars for 35 minutes or quart jars for 45 minutes (adjust for elevation above 1,000 feet).

7. Cool and Test Seals: 12 to 24 hours rest period.

Turn off heat, remove canner lid, and let jars sit in water for 5 minutes. Carefully transfer jars to a towel-lined counter. Leave undisturbed for 12–24 hours. Check seals by pressing down on the middle of each lid; it should not flex or pop. Remove rings and wipe jars for storage.

Critical Safety & Canning Tips

- **Always Use Bottled Lemon Juice:** Do not use fresh-squeezed lemon juice for canning. Bottled lemon juice has a standardized, uniform pH level (around 2.0 to 2.4), whereas fresh lemons vary in acidity and may leave tomatoes vulnerable to *Clostridium botulinum*.
- **Respect Headspace:** Leave precisely $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of headspace at the top of each jar. Too little headspace can cause juice to boil over and break the seal; too much headspace leaves trapped air that discolors the top layer of tomatoes.
- **Fingertip-Tight Rings:** Screw the metal bands on until you meet resistance, then turn just a quarter-turn more. Over-tightening prevents air from escaping during processing, causing buckled lids.

Nutritional Information

Servings per Quart Jar: 8 | Serving Size: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (120g)

Metric	Amount Per Serving
Calories	32 kcal
Total Fat	0.2g
└ Saturated Fat	0g
└ Trans Fat	0g
Cholesterol	0mg
Sodium	180mg (or 10mg without added salt)

Metric	Amount Per Serving
Total Carbohydrates	7g
└─ <i>Dietary Fiber</i>	2g
└─ <i>Total Sugars</i>	4.5g
Protein	1.5g
Vitamin D	0mcg
Calcium	18mg
Iron	0.6mg
Potassium	290mg