

The Quickest Tomato Sauce

This recipe comes from Jamie Oliver's book, "Jamie at Home". To make this you will need a coarse mesh strainer. They are available everywhere, from Canadian Tire to kitchenware stores. These strainers usually come in several "hole" sizes. For this purpose you want the coarsest mesh you can find.

The key to success with this sauce is to use only canned Italian whole plum tomatoes. Look for "San Marzano" on the label. San Marzano tomatoes, a variety of plum tomatoes, are considered by many chefs to be the best sauce tomatoes in the world. They come from a small town of the same name near Naples, Italy. Compared to the Roma Tomatoes with which most people are familiar, Marzano tomatoes are thinner and pointier in shape. The flesh is much thicker with fewer seeds, and the taste is much stronger sweeter and less acidic. You can find them at Italian grocers and sometimes I see them at Costco.

2 large (28 oz.) cans Italian whole plum tomatoes
2 tablespoons olive oil
4 cloves garlic, peeled and thinly sliced
One bunch fresh basil, leaves picked off the stem and roughly torn
1 teaspoon kosher or sea salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes

1. Pour canned tomatoes and their juices into a large mixing bowl. Using your hands, squish the tomatoes until they are coarsely chopped.
2. Place a large saucepan over high heat. Add olive oil and garlic and turn heat down to medium. Cook garlic for a minute or two, just until it begins to get golden in colour. Add tomatoes and basil.
3. Add salt and black pepper and red pepper flakes, if you are using them. Using the back of a wooden spoon, continue to squish the tomatoes so they break down even further. Continue cooking until the mixture comes to a boil.
4. Have a large bowl with a coarse mesh strainer set over it. Pour about half the sauce into the sieve. Discard the basil and garlic. Strain the sauce, using the back of a wooden spoon to push through any larger bits of tomato. Repeat with the remaining sauce. Don't forget to scrape off any of the tomatoey goodness off the back of the strainer with a spatula.
5. Pour sauce back into the pan and bring to a boil. Turn down heat and simmer for about 10 minutes to concentrate the flavours.

This sauce will keep in the fridge for about a week or in the freezer for several months.