

### Save your 'maters!

We know tomatoes are great fresh but they are also very freezer-friendly. Fresh tomatoes are great for freezing and their slightly acidic sweetness can be a welcome flavor in the colder months to come. To freeze tomatoes, simply rinse well with water, core out the top and around the stem, dip into boiling water for about one minute (blanch), and place in ice water to remove the skin. After removing the skin, chop or crush tomatoes as desired and freeze in freezer bags. Tomatoes can also be frozen whole, freeze them on a cookie sheet and then transfer to a freezer bag. Tomatoes can be stored in the freezer for up to six months.

As summer winds down, those with more than one or two tomato plants may be compiling mountains of tomatoes. Capturing and concentrating their flavors in sauces is another way to preserve the flavors of your tomato harvests. Tomatoes that are a little more bruised and beaten are perfect to cook down into sauce.

One of the more common tomato sauces is a classic *marinara*, which is a chunky, tomato sauce with garlic, olive oil, and oregano. Variations can be made by flavoring a tomato sauce with crushed red pepper, known as *arrabiata*. *Bolognese* is more of a meat sauce created with tomatoes and additional vegetables. French cuisine uses a similar sauce referred to as *ragu* that includes even more tomato than the Bolognese versions. *Puttanesca* is a tomato sauce laden with capers and anchovies, olives, and pepper flakes. *Coulis* is an extremely smooth puree in which the tomatoes have been strained. Hint when making fresh tomato sauce: for thicker, more concentrated flavor in your tomato sauce- roast the tomatoes first to help evaporate excess moisture.

#### Fresh Tomato Sauce:

##### Ingredients:

- 1 onion, diced
- 1 small carrot or 1 red bell pepper, chopped (optional)
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 10 very ripe tomatoes, crushed (about 12 cups)
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 Tbsp. sherry vinegar
- 2 large cloves garlic, crushed,
- 1 handful of fresh basil (chopped)
- Ground black pepper to taste

Directions: Sauté onions, carrots/red pepper in olive oil. Add tomatoes and simmer 1-2 hours (depending on how watery tomatoes are) or until thick. Add salt, sugar, vinegar, garlic, basil, and pepper. Cook for 15 minutes and adjust seasonings as desired.