

Easy Preserving for the Frugal Gardener: Tomato Edition



I'll say it loud and clear, I love the idea of canning, but I hate going through the process. It's long and tedious. I'm always left feeling paranoid that I've done something wildly wrong, which will leave me with botulism infested jars.

It's one of the reasons I'm partial to quick-pickling and other easy preservation methods. Recently, I was struggling to think of ways to use tomatoes in my cooking. I was adamant that I didn't want to make sauce or do anything boring. I wanted a unique way to use the mountain of tomatoes that had accumulated on my counter. Alas, my efforts to think of anything creative didn't really materialize. Honestly, despite the vast amount of tomatoes on my hands these days, I'm uninterested in eating them except for occasionally in a

sandwich.

It's one of the reasons I'm of the belief that tomatoes are overrated. Don't get me wrong, tomatoes are excellent food! But, they're very one-note. As someone who enjoys cooking a lot of Asian meals, tomatoes are tough to use up. They don't exactly fit into a stir fry dish!

So this weekend I stared at the beautiful mix of yellow, red, and purple tomatoes in my kitchen and decided to stop worrying about being creative. I cooked them down with the addition of a few spices and used my trusty handheld blender (AKA: immersion blender) to create a thick super-tomato-ey sauce. The glorious pile of tomatoes made enough for two 750 mL jars of sauce. I expect more tomatoes to arrive in the near future, so the two jars suited me just fine.

After letting the sauce cool a bit – a very small bit because I'm impatient – I poured it into the jars and left them to cool a little longer because everything was still piping hot. Later, I popped them into my basement freezer.

Super easy, right? Instead of letting my tomatoes go to waste, I made a sauce that I'll be able to pull out of the freezer anytime I need it. For pasta, pizza, and whatever else. The jars are relatively large, so I envision one will last us through a few delicious meals. I'm sure I'll be thankful for my minimal effort when winter comes at us full throttle.

Another bonus? I won't have to spend money on jars of tomato sauce, which are surprisingly expensive at the supermarket!

Do you have other simple sauces or recipes that you like to make in order to preserve your harvest? Sound off in the comments!