

Make Your Own Sauces



Making sauces from scratch can add something special to a meal. Homemade sauces tend to be more nutritious than store-bought varieties, which often have added sodium (salt), sugar, and preservatives. Sauces made at home with fresh ingredients are also more flavorful, and you can make them to suit your own taste.

Getting Started

While there are many types of sauces, two basic recipes to learn are tomato sauce and pesto.

How to Make Tomato Sauce

1. Wash, peel, and finely chop a medium onion and 2 cloves garlic.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. The oil is hot enough when you add a piece of onion and can hear it sizzle.
3. Add the onion and cook until soft, about 5 minutes.
4. Add the chopped garlic and cook for 2 minutes.
5. Add 2 (28-ounce) cans crushed tomatoes with the liquid, 3 tablespoons tomato paste, 1 teaspoon dried oregano, and 1 dried bay leaf.
6. Cook uncovered, stirring occasionally, for about 30 minutes. The sauce will begin to thicken.
7. Add salt and pepper to taste. Remove bay leaf before serving. Serves 6.

Equipment

- Cutting board
- Knife
- Measuring cups
- Large pot or saucepan (for making tomato sauce)
- Wooden spoon
- Food processor or blender (for making pesto)

How to Make Pesto

1. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup pine nuts or walnuts to a blender or food processor. Pulse to finely chop the nuts.
2. Add 3 cloves peeled garlic, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups fresh basil leaves, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt. If desired, add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely grated parmesan cheese. Pulse a few times to mix ingredients well.
3. Slowly add $\frac{1}{3}$ cup olive oil through the top of the blender or food processor while pureeing the mixture.
4. Use at once or store in a covered container in the refrigerator. Serves 3.

Tips

- Use ripe fresh tomatoes when they are in season. To remove the skins before cooking, first cut out the cores. Then cut a shallow “X” on each tomato with a knife. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Place the tomatoes in the boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds. Remove the tomatoes with a large slotted spoon and gently drop them in ice water (this will help loosen the skin). Once cooled, peel off the skin and remove the seeds from each tomato. Use 2 pounds of chopped fresh tomatoes to replace a 28-ounce can of crushed tomatoes.
- Add herbs, such as basil, parsley, or thyme, to tomato sauce to vary the flavor. Use dried herbs more sparingly than fresh, since a small amount of a dried herb adds a lot of flavor.
- Add 1 tablespoon chopped jalapeño or a splash of red wine vinegar to tomato sauce for an extra kick.
- Double the recipe for tomato sauce or pesto and freeze half for later use.
- Limit portions of pesto to about 2 tablespoons per $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups cooked pasta.

