**Recipe – Tomato (pasta) sauce:**

Canned tomatoes version (total time 4-5 hrs – prep time 45 min. +/-)

Ingredients for one pot of sauce (12 qt. pot) If you intend to store in 1qt. Mason jars, will make approx. 7-8 jars:

* 8-9 cans of crushed tomatoes either CENTO brand or VANTIA brand crushed San Marzano tomatoes (no need to buy the certified version at $5/can…just the regular ones)
* One med-to-large Spanish or Vidalia onion (sweeter onions..)
* ½ cup of decent regular (not Ex Virgin) Italian Olive oil (Colavita, Filippo Berio, Botticelli, etc)
* 10-12 nice fresh leaves of Italian basil
* 1 tblsp of sea salt
* 1 tsp baking soda

1/3 cup of sugar

* 1 tsp black pepper
* Optional: preferred meat additive = 3 good strips of boneless country style pork ribs, or 4-5 beef necks bones with some decent meat on them.

In a 12 qt. pot, add olive oil, and heat. If adding the meat option, sear meat and partially cook in the olive oil.

While meat is searing, dice the onion. Remove meat when seared/partially cooked and set aside for a while in a bowl.

Add the onions and let cook for a while, stirring frequently until opaque. Add a couple of tblsp of water occasionally to help wilt the onions to prevent from burning.

Once onions are cooked, add the tomatoes (8 cans 1st….then the 9th if you can fit it). Rinse the residual tomato juice lightly in each can with little water and pour into the pot *(approx. 1-2 oz. of water for each can…..just enough to rinse out the residual into the pot. Don’t want to make the tomatoes thin & watery).* Then add all other ingredients stir well, raise heat to max (medium if electric stove), cover and bring to a boil. Stir frequently to avoid bottom burning.

Adjust heat to lowest setting, add meat, and cover pot but not fully. “Crack” it so that water vapor escapes to avoid watering down the sauce. Cook for 4 hrs.+ stirring well & frequently every 15 min or so. Be sure condensation on the cover does not pour into the sauce each time you remove it.

When done, color will be slightly deeper, and will have reduced by at least ½ inch. Remove meats and store separately.

Fresh farm summer tomatoes version (total time 8-10 hrs – prep time 4hrs. +/-):

Same ingredients as above, except for the tomatoes…obviously. For approx. the same quantity, you will need approx. ½ bushel+ of San Marzano-style, Roma-style or similar style plum tomatoes from your local farm. Make sure they are ripe, juicy, and a little on the sweet side (at the farm I’ll occasionally spot-taste-test a few while picking…)

Other tools/items needed:

A tomato crusher….like this one: <https://www.amazon.com/OXO-Good-Grips-Food-1071478/dp/B000I0MGKE/ref=sr_1_4?dchild=1&keywords=tomato+crusher&qid=1592509089&sr=8-4>

A very large pot - min. 24 qt. (20qt. if 24 is too big for the cooking area you have) preferably stainless steel or a decent gauge aluminum. This is a nice one with a convenient strainer (so uyou wont have to get a separate strainer): <https://www.amazon.com/CONCORD-Stainless-Steamer-Cookware-steaming/dp/B07WJ2RB2K/ref=sr_1_4?dchild=1&keywords=24+qt+pot&qid=1592509822&sr=8-4>

Possible: 2 small cans (or one larger) of tomato paste (in case the tomatoes are too watery after crushing)

Rinse tomatoes. Place in the 20/24 qt. pot in the strainer (i.e with the strainer in), fill with water, cover & bring to a boil. Let tomatoes boil for approx. 30 min. on low heat. Lift strainer out & let tomatoes cool & strain for a good 15-30 min.

While tomatoes are straining, in a 12 qt. pot cook the onions in olive oil as per instructions above (no meats in this one, to preserve the tomato summer flavor). Begin crushing the tomatoes by placing/mounting the hand-crusher on a large bowl….…bowl size should be adequate for the crusher to comfortably sit on top of it. Add enough tomatoes to almost fill the crusher and start crushing by rotating the handle. Each full round of crushing will leave residual pulp at the bottom of the crusher. Scrape/scoop it out & set is aside for a 2nd and possibly a 3rd round of crushing (pulp will always have some residual usable tomato in it).

When onions are done & ready for the tomatoes, pour in the tomatoes you have crushed thus far into the pot, add all other ingredients as per above, and continue crushing the remaining tomatoes, always adding them to the pot as you go along. Once you’ve crushed all the tomatoes, transfer all the pulp set aside back into the crusher, and crush at least another round or 2…...you’ll know when there’s nothing left to crush. Cook tomatoes/sauce per instructions above. If you find it too thin and watery, add the tomato paste, but not more than amounts indicated, or it will take away from the original flavor.

Storing in Mason Jars: <https://www.walmart.com/ip/Anchor-Hocking-Regular-1-Qt-Glass-Jar-12-Pack/45910124>

You’ll need:

8-10 32 oz mason jars

24 qt. pot (with strainer in it)

A thick heat resistant glove (for grabbing/handling hot jars out of boiling pot)

Fill pot with 6” of water, bring to a boil. Place jars 3 or 4 at a time lay flat down submerged along with the lids. Let boil for a few minutes to sterilize. Remove, set aside, and continue sterilizing all remaining jars. Once all jars have been sterilized, add cold water to the pot, approx. 6 inches to cool it off.

Once cooked sauce has cooled but still warm, begin the process of jarring. To fill the jars I like to use one of those plastic quart containers used to sell soups (ex wonton soup). Ladle the sauce into the plastic container 3/4 full, and pour slowly into each jar at an angle while squeezing the top of the plastic container enough to neatly pour the sauce into the jar at an angle so that it doesn’t splash at the bottom. You want to avoid splatter onto the rim of the jar so that the lid makes a nice clean dry seal. Should there be any splatter, simply wipe it clean well and dry with a clean paper towel. Fill jars to about an inch from the top, carefully and evenly place the flat lid on, then tighten the ring as tight as possible….I use a flat rubber potholder or thick rubber glove to get a good grip on the ring.

Once you have all jars filled and ready to vacuum pack, place them standing up into the 24 qt. pot, making sure the water isn’t boiling hot, or the drastic temp difference will crack the jars. You should be able to fit at least 6 jars. Make sure the jars are fully submerged by at least an inch or water. Cover and bring to a rolling boil for 20 min.

Lids should eventually be slightly domed/buckled upwards from the heat & internal pressure. Remove the jars using the heat resistant glove (perhaps with the use of tongs or a large metal spoon to lift them) and set aside for cooling. You should eventually hear the lids pop and flatten from the remaining air being sucked out (vacuumed) as they are cooling. If there are any remaining jars that need to be vacuum packed, you’ll have to repeat the step of cooling the water before submerging the next set of jars. Just pour out half the water and refill it with cold water to cool it off, repeat boil procedure.

\*\*\* Make sure ALL lids have eventually flattened…i.e. all jars have vacuum packed. Press down on the lids to make sure there’s no “movement” just like the top of a Snapple bottle once you “pop” it open.

Jarred sauce should last a while…I’ve had jars of sauce I used that were more than 1 yr. old……But usually I’ll jar 35-40 in late August and it lasts until early to mid-summer the following yr.

================================================================================

Let me know eventually how you make out with any of this….its a labor of love for me. My summer tomato process is a 3 to 4 day, with 3 heaping bushels, boiled & cooked outside with the help of the kiddies, in a 60qt pot on an outdoor LP burner. Enjoy !

Anthony G.