

# Eggs Poached in Tomato Sauce (Uova al Pomodoro)

By Emiko

The most basic version of this recipe requires some form of tomato, be it fresh, canned, whole, chopped or pureed; some aromatics such as garlic or herbs; and, of course, eggs. But it is a dish that is easily adaptable and takes well to a number of extra additions. As you head south down the Italian peninsula towards Abruzzo and Campania, this dish gets a little kick of chile and is known as uova in purgatorio (eggs in purgatory) for the added heat. Hop across to the island of Sardinia where a similar dish, pane frattau, is made with carta musica (a dry, Sardinian flatbread), layered with tomato sauce and grated Pecorino cheese and topped with a poached egg. There's beauty in the simplicity of this wonderful dish, but if you want to add something to beef it up, try some pancetta, diced and cooked till golden, a few melted anchovy fillets, or even sausage (pork and fennel are ideal – remove the skins and crumble the meat right into the sauce), added before the eggs. Cooked beans of any type (but particularly cannellini or borlotti), chickpeas, or mushrooms add substance, while spinach or other greens are great for a splash of color. A little Parmesan or Pecorino grated over the top is not a bad idea and for those who like things hot, a little chile goes a long way here. Just be sure to keep it simple: leave your eggs runny and serve with plenty of crusty bread to mop up the sauces. Feel free to serve 2 eggs per person if you're hungry.

Serves 4

- 1 can (14 ounces or 400 grams) chopped tomatoes or tomato purée or 1 pound (500 grams) fresh tomatoes
  - 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
  - 2 cloves garlic, squashed
  - 1/2 cup water
  - Salt and pepper to taste
  - 4 fresh eggs
  - A handful of fresh herbs: basil, parsley, oregano, thyme, or sage, for example
1. If using fresh tomatoes, blanch them in boiling water for a minute to easily peel the skins, then dice finely.
  2. Gently heat the olive oil in a skillet over low heat and add the squashed garlic cloves, allowing them to infuse and sizzle gently until golden. Then add the tomato (canned, puréed, or fresh) and the water and bring to a simmer. Season with salt and pepper and cook for 15 minutes or so over medium-low heat until the sauce has reduced slightly and thickened.
  3. Crack the eggs directly into the sauce over low heat and leave them to poach, covered, until the whites have cooked and the yolk is soft and runny, 3 to 5 minutes.
  4. Serve scattered with herbs and enjoy with some fresh crusty bread and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.