

Kitchen essentials: mastering fresh tomato sauce

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(HealthDay)—High in lycopene, low in calories, and rich in vitamins A

and C, tomatoes are delicious fruits that can be turned into savory dishes. Try this simple fresh tomato sauce to make good use of this summer favorite.

Fast Fresh Tomato Sauce

- 1-1/2 pounds fresh [tomatoes](#)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red chili flakes
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 4 fresh basil leaves
- 1/2 cup [white wine](#) or water

Quarter the tomatoes, remove the cores and chop them coarsely in a food processor.

Heat a skillet over medium heat and add the [olive oil](#), garlic and chili flakes for extra spice. Cook 30 seconds, then add the tomatoes. Sprinkle with salt, add the basil and bring to a simmer. Add the wine or water. Simmer 15 to 20 minutes until thickened.

Toss with your favorite whole grain pasta and sprinkle with cheese, or use as a sauce for seafood or chicken.

Yield: Enough for four servings

Have too many tomatoes to turn into sauce right away? Here's a simple trick that will allow you to enjoy summer's bounty into the winter.

First, to make it easy to peel off the skins, fill a large stockpot about three-quarters of the way to the top with water and bring to a boil. With

a sharp paring knife, cut an "X" through the skin on the bottom of each tomato and, two or three at a time, dunk them in the water for about 20 seconds. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the tomatoes to a bowl of ice [water](#).

As soon as you can handle them, remove the skins. Then cut into quarters, scoop out the seeds and chop the flesh coarsely. Transfer prepped tomatoes to ziplock bags, label and freeze.

When you're ready to make sauce, defrost a bag or two and follow the sauce recipe. Use frozen tomatoes within six months.

More information: The U.S. Department of Agriculture has a guide to [tomatoes](#), including nutrition facts.

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