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Semi-Finalist



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Oh So Many Uses..... Homemade Tomato Sauce

Recipe Number: 126

Prep time: 15 -20 minutes

Cook time: 2 hrs 30 minutes

Oven Temp: 325°



INGREDIENTS: 20 Roma tomatoes, or any garden tomatoes halved and seeded
¼ cup olive oil
½ teaspoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon pepper
1 cup diced onion
1 green pepper diced
2 cloves of garlic, minced
1 tablespoon finely chopped oregano leaves fresh is best
1 tablespoon of basil
1 cup white wine

DIRECTIONS: In 2 (13 by 9-inch) pans place tomato halves cut side up. Sprinkle with oil, salt and pepper, onion, garlic, and herbs. Bake tomatoes for 2 hours. Check the tomatoes after 1 hour and turn down the heat if they seem to be cooking too quickly. Then turn the oven to 400 degrees and bake another 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and process tomatoes. Add white wine and run through food processor until creamy.

STORY: *Growing up on a farm we are all meat and potatoes, college – cold pizza, single living – cooking for one, and now that I have a family, it is about nutrition and bringing the family together for a few minutes a day to share about each other's day. Sitting around the table for a meal is and will always be the key to keeping families together.*

I have been cooking since I was eight, so I have a few years under my belt. So it was hard to narrow down to just one all-time favorite recipe. Within the extended family, we have many family favorites. Christmas at my grandmother's was always soup – chili and oyster. I do not care to carry on the oyster soup tradition. My maternal grandmother made the best fried chicken in the world. She has been gone for over 20 years, and I still have not perfected her chicken. As we grow and have our own families, so have our family favorites. The media has taken my cooking skills to a new level, and with the use of the internet my family has been exposed to a variety of new dishes. I love to Google a food item or idea and see where the information highway takes me for a new adventure in the food world.

That brings me to my all time favorite recipe – my “homemade tomato sauce”. I have a garden every spring, and all I can seem to grow are tomatoes. Boy do they produce! With the need to use these seasonal vegetables I had to figure out how to make them last all year round. I love to make lasagna, enchiladas, homemade pizza, and other everyday recipes that use tomatoes. I can take these tomatoes from the original state and turn them into anything I need just from my sauce. From the original state straight out of the oven, to the food processor I have a nice rich and thick sauce for pizza. A creamy tomato soup is just a bit of cream away. Adding just a few ingredients turns the sauce to a spicy Mexican red sauce for enchiladas or rice casserole. Using the same base sauce, I toss in a few more Italian spices and have the perfect sauce for spaghetti or lasagna. I have had friends use the sauce for a salsa. The house lingers with the incredible smells of an Italian restaurant and all along having the addition of the hidden ingredients make the sauce full of flavor. The kids don't even know they are getting the vegetables they need. The versatile use of this recipe has become our family favorite.

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