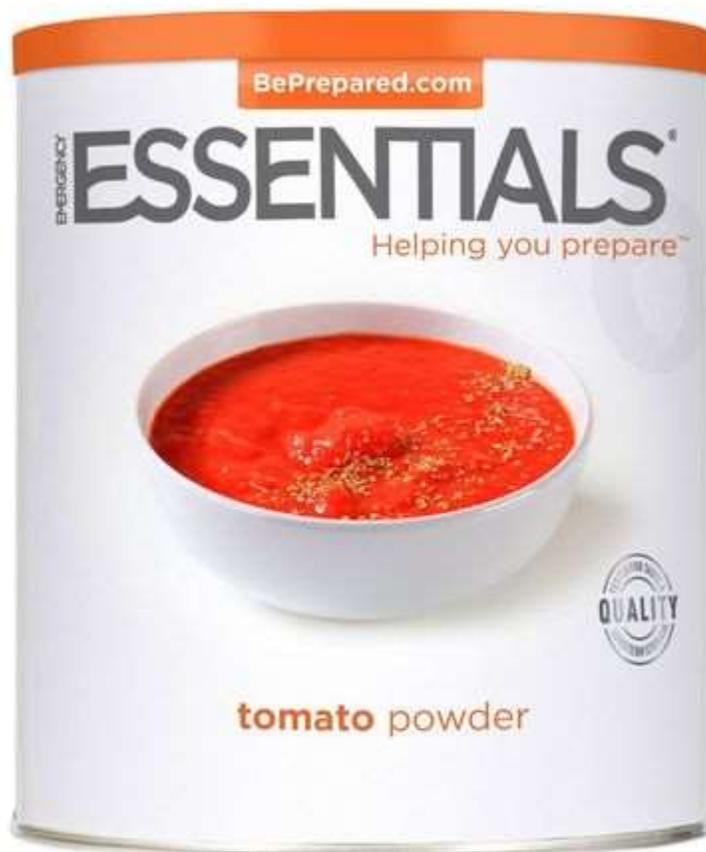


Dehydrating Tomato Sauce

By Joseph Parish



After a recent survival group meeting which I attended, I returned home to do some of my famous experimenting. No longer is it necessary to purchase commercial instant tomato sauces such as those offered by "Mrs. Wages". My goal today was to create a dehydrated tomato sauce product specifically designed for survivalist food storage. During a time of crisis, I feel our best chances of survival lies in dehydrated food over those refrigerated or frozen entrees.

Tomato powder is easy to use when not just making sauce for pasta but also an excellent addition to dry soup mixes. You can readily use your dried tomato sauce in just about any type of dish where tomato sauce would be used. For long term storage this product will last for a minimum of five years and likely much longer.

The key to dehydrated tomato sauce lies in first creating what one would refer to as tomato sauce leathers. These are essentially the same thing as fruit leathers but made from a vegetable such as in this case tomatoes.

To make your tomato sauce leathers you will start with your favorite tomato sauce whether it is handmade or out of a jar which you purchased from the local grocery store. For this experiment I choose an inexpensive generic Wal-Mart brand without any sort of meat or additives in it. Perhaps at another time I will experiment with meat sauces, etc. but for now I planned to use plain sauce. After selecting your sauce, place it in your food blender and run it until you have a product with a thick consistency. The intent of this is to completely emulsify any of the larger tomato chunks which may be present in your commercial sauce. Take my word for it even the inexpensive versions are loaded with tomato chunks. I at first was going to skip this step until I started to pour my sauce onto the trays. That is when I noticed the large pieces of tomato. Blending the sauce will not only thicken it but also provide a better basis for forming the desired leathers. If additions such as mushrooms, meat chunks, or other additives, are desired in the final product you should consider adding them during the re-hydration stage.

These instructions are provided for an oven in the event that no dehydrator is available. If you are using an oven for this process you will need to set it at the lowest setting possible. In my case our ovens lowest operating temperature was 170 degrees. Place a sheet of common parchment paper on a cookie tray and then spread the tomato sauce mixture one fourth inch deep onto the tray. Getting the tomato sauce level will be the most difficult part of this process. After spreading the sauce on the tray, the best way to level it out is to gently tap the tray on the counter. This will smooth its contents and give an even distribution.

Dehydrate your tomato sauce for approximately eight hours. Be sure when using your oven that you prop open the oven door slightly to allow moisture to escape. In about four hours the sauce should be solid enough so that you can flip it over for the duration of the project. The start time was not critical for me since someone is usually up at all hours throughout the night in my home. I might be up writing or my wife may be awake and browsing around the internet. Your finished product should have the consistency of leather and should be dry to the touch.

Once your dehydrating is completed allow the sauce leathers to cool and then break them into small chunks. Next place the chunks in your freezer for approximately one hour. At the end of that hour put the leather chunks into your blender or food processor and grind it into a fine powder. The resultant powder will have the same texture as your common powdered sugar and like your sugar it does not do well with high humidity. When storing this product choose pint canning jars. Fill the jar to within one half inch of the top and place an oxygen absorber in it. After closing the jar, the lid will seal and remove all traces of air.

When it comes time to make that spaghetti dinner simply combine one half cup of hot water to three tablespoons of the dehydrated powder and you will once again have your spaghetti sauce. Too little powder will result in a very runny sauce.

This same process applies also to other sauces such as pizza or taco. Using a little imagination can go a long way. To add some icing to the cake, I would like to include a spaghetti sauce recipe which can be used with your newly made tomato sauce powder.

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons of dehydrated tomato powder
- ½ cup of water

- 3 teaspoons of olive oil
- 2 teaspoons of onion powder
- 1 teaspoon of garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon of dried basil
- 1 teaspoon of sugar
- ½ teaspoon of dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon of black pepper
- ½ teaspoon of salt

Combine the above ingredients and simmer on a medium heat for 15 minutes.