

Roasted-Tomato and Caper Spread Recipe

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For this savory spread, fleshy plum tomatoes are slowly roasted with aromatic garlic and thyme until they grow jammy and sweet with concentrated flavor. The oven-dried tomatoes are pulsed with briny capers, then combined with a generous dose of the best-quality extra-virgin olive oil for a simple spread that's packed with sweet and salty flavors. It's perfect spooned onto crusty bread with creamy *stracciatella*, tossed into pasta, or served alongside grilled meat and seafood. This recipe can easily be scaled up or down to accommodate your produce haul.



Why It Works

- Peeling the tomatoes results in a smoother spread.
- The briny capers balance the tomatoes' concentrated sweetness and enhance their savory notes.
- Slowly roasting the tomatoes at a low temperature prevents them from developing any bitter, caramelized flavors.

YIELD: Makes about 3 cups

ACTIVE TIME: 45 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 5 to 9 hours

Ingredients

3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil (6 ounces; 170g), divided

4 pounds Roma (plum) tomatoes (1.8kg; about 18 medium)

4 to 6 medium cloves garlic, thinly sliced

8 to 10 sprigs fresh thyme

1/4 cup capers (2 ounces; 60g), drained

1 teaspoon dried basil

Directions

- Getting Started:** Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper and set 2 wire cooling racks into the sheets. Brush wire racks with 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil. Adjust 2 oven racks to the upper- and lower-middle positions and preheat oven to 250°F (120°C). Fill a large stockpot with water and bring to a boil. Fill a large bowl with ice and water to make an ice bath.
- To Blanch the Tomatoes:** Using a small paring (<https://www.serious-eats.com/2016/10/the-best-paring-knives.html>) or tourné knife (<https://www.serious-eats.com/2018/01/the-tourne-knife-a-paring-knife-that-turns-heads-and-why-you-need-it.html>), remove the core from the stem end of each tomato. On the opposite end, carve a small x

Kosher salt and freshly ground
black pepper

through the skin of each tomato. Working with small batches of 4 to 5 at a time, drop tomatoes into the boiling water and blanch until you see the skin pulling away from the flesh in the area where each tomato is scored, about 30 seconds to 1 minute. Transfer tomatoes to ice bath to halt the cooking and continue until all the tomatoes are blanched.

3. Using a small paring knife, tourné knife, or your hands, peel tomatoes. Cut tomatoes in half lengthwise and arrange them, cut side up, on oiled wire racks. Brush cut sides of tomatoes with 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil. Place a slice of garlic on each tomato half. Scatter sprigs of thyme across tomatoes.
4. Place trays of tomatoes in the oven and bake until each tomato half has reduced to a quarter of its size. They should remain more plump than sun-dried tomatoes, still jammy in the center. Depending on the air circulation in your oven and how juicy the tomatoes are to start, this can take anywhere from 4 to 8 hours. The total weight of the tomatoes after cooking will drop from 4 pounds (1.8kg) to about 14 ounces (400g).
5. **To Make the Spread:** Discard garlic and thyme from roasted tomatoes. In a food processor (<https://www.seriousseats.com/2017/10/best-food-processor-equipment-review.html>), pulse together roasted tomatoes, capers, and dried basil. Stir in remaining 1/2 cup olive oil and season with kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. Serve with bread, tossed with pasta or vegetables, or alongside grilled meats. The spread will keep in the refrigerator for 1 week or in the freezer for 6 months.

Special Equipment

Rimmed baking sheets, wire racks, pastry brush, food processor, stockpot