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Roasted Tomato and Pepper Romesco Sauce perfect for pasta or pita chip dip

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Roasted Tomato and Pepper Romesco Sauce
Photos Susie Iventosch

spice section. You can either roast your tomatoes and peppers in the oven, or on the grill, which is what we usually do, but the roasted veggies give this sauce such great flavor. Be sure to use whatever juices you have from roasting the veggies in the sauce too. The sauce stores well in the refrigerator for a week in an air-tight container.

Romesco sauce is a perfectly delicious roasted tomato and pepper sauce originating from the Catalonia region in northeastern Spain. It's most commonly used as a sauce to accompany fish or meat, but we also love it over roasted veggies, or as a sauce over pasta, especially fettuccine! It even makes a great dip for pita chips. There are many variations on this sauce from mild to a bit spicy, but some of the more common ingredients besides the roasted peppers and tomatoes include garlic, parsley, toasted almonds, paprika, lemon juice, wine vinegar and olive oil. The type of nut can vary, but they are what give the sauce the signature texture and thickness. We usually use toasted, slivered (unsalted) almonds, but pine nuts or even hazelnuts can be used. Some Romesco sauce recipes call for chili powder, and we like to use New Mexico chili powder, to keep it a bit more on the mild side, but we also love it without chili powder and just more paprika. We use two kinds of paprika - smoked and the regular paprika you find in the

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(Makes about 1 1/2 cups of sauce)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large orange bell pepper, cut in half
- 2 large tomatoes, cut in half (or 25 cherry tomatoes)
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1/2 cup toasted slivered almonds
- 2 tbsp. fresh parsley leaves
- 2 small cloves garlic
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. New Mexico chili powder (optional)
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 4 tbsp. olive oil

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the grill to medium-high heat or the oven to 400 F. Spray a baking dish with cooking spray. We like to use an aluminum pan so we can use it right on the barbecue. But, you can also use a glass, metal or ceramic baking dish if you plan to roast your veggies in the oven.

Place the tomatoes and peppers in the prepared pan and toss them in 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Lightly

season with salt and pepper. Place the pan directly on the grill and cook the veggies for about 5 minutes per side. Flip them with a spatula halfway through. They should be slightly charred and softened. In the oven, it will take longer to get the veggies roasted and charred, maybe 15 minutes or so. Remove the veggies from the heat once they are softened and charred.

Place the roasted tomatoes and peppers in the food processor along with the almonds, parsley, garlic, salt, both paprikas and process until smooth-ish. (If you want to add chili powder, add it at this time too, with the other spices.) The sauce won't be completely smooth due to the almonds. Add the lemon juice, red wine vinegar and olive oil and process again. Serve right away or store in the refrigerator until ready to use.



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