

CROWD saucing

Checking your bottles have sealed after water bath preserving



How to test bottle seals

Most lids will seal with a "pop" sound while they're cooling, as the lid gets sucked down by the vacuum created by the contents cooling and contracting inside the bottle. After cooling the bottles for 12 to 24 hours, test seals with one of the following options (do not test the bottles while they are still hot!):

- Press the middle of the lid with a finger or thumb. If the lid springs up when you release your finger, the lid is unsealed.
- Tap the lid with a teaspoon. A clear ringing sound means a good seal.
- Hold the bottle at eye level and look across the lid. The lid should be concave (curved down slightly in the centre). If the centre of the lid is either flat or bulging, it may not be sealed.

If a bottle is not sealed, refrigerate it and use the unspoiled food within two to three days. Other options are to reprocess (see below) the food within 24 hours or to freeze it.

Reprocessing bottles that have become unsealed

If a lid fails to seal on the bottle by the time a home-canned bottle reaches room temperature (normally within 12 to 24 hours of preserving), remove the lid and check the bottle-sealing surface for any faults of sauce that have boiled up and stopped the seal from sealing. If necessary change the bottle, add a new, properly prepared lid, and reprocess within 24 hours using the same processing time in the passata method.

Text edited from
http://www.pickyourown.org/spoilage_testing.htm#z2gT0eylgXimA0II.99

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Lids, bottles, sterilisation



Lids

Where you can, reuse lids and bottles. Old glass sauce or juice bottles work well.

Having the correct lids is very important for ensuring your passata bottles seal when they are preserved in the water bath.

Check your lids before using them. Make sure they fit the bottles (screw on tight) and that they have a pop-up bottom on the top and/or have a complete, unworn rubber seal around them on the inside of the lid.

Lid seals are usually white or cream.

Many commercial juice and sauce bottles have a rubber seal that is set inside the lid. It can be used a few times, until it wears so much that it doesn't seal anymore.

Discard lids that are rusted, have a seal that is cracked or worn, or lids that are dented.



Bottles

Check bottles for crack and chips. Damaged bottles may rupture during the preserving water bath process.

Ideally, use bottles that are a similar size and shape. This will help make the water bath preserving easier and uniform. If your bottles are the same size and volume, you will have uniform coverage with the water level in your saucepan or vacola, and equal heat distribution among the bottles.

You can also use pasta sauce bottles, canning jars, 'Ball' jars, mason jars, fowlers jars.

Canning Jars

Sterilising beforehand?

I have read that if you are using a water bath preserving method after pouring passata into the bottles, you do not have to spend time sterilising the bottles and lids you will use.

You should always clean you bottles thoroughly though.

Ideally, wash them in a ratio of 1:4 parts vinegar and water, and scrub them with a bottle brush.

If you are making hot passata which you will pour into bottles and seal (and NOT using a water bath preserving method) then sterilising is recommended. Boil your bottles before use for 15 mins or put washed bottles in an oven at 140°C for 15 minutes. Make sure the bottles are not touching in the oven.



The classic 'Ball' two-part lid

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CROWD SAUCING

Crowdsaucing Day equipment list and considerations

Equipment	Suggestions
Bottles, jars, and lids	Have everyone who can bring their own. Then they can take theirs own home again with sauce inside! Mark or personalise everyone's bottles so there is no confusion at the end of the day.
Knives	Small and sharp.
Buckets, bins, large containers, large saucepans	These will be needed for various tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -One for compost -One for chopped tomatoes -One for straining the cooked tomatoes over -One for catching the sauce as it's made -Some for setting up an outdoor washing station for the clean up -Some spare for random jobs
Chopping boards	Optional
Tea towels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -For handling hot things -For inside the saucepan or vacola when you're water bath preserving your sauce -For clean up and sticky hands
Colanders or slotted spoons	Everyone can bring one to use to strain the cooked tomatoes.

Other processing options and considerations

- You can use any method or recipe you wish to. You can also add things to the fresh sauce i.e. A sprig of basil in the bottom of each bottle.
- Do not water bath the bottles (all or some) at the event — most people are able to do this at home later.
- Participants can take the fresh sauce and freeze it instead.
- Prepare and eat a meal/snack during the day; it's a nice way to stop and chat.
- Have an outdoor area set up with a dishwashing station.
- It's good to change up what people are doing i.e. those cooking tomatoes get a go at processing .

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CROWD saucing

Crowdsaucing Day equipment list and considerations continued

Saucepans, various sizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -For cooking the tomatoes before processing them -For water bath preserving your fresh passata bottles if you don't have a vacola -For cooking up pasta to enjoy with fresh passata at the end of your day
Tables and/or bench space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -For setting up a passata machine (if being used) -For keeping your bottles when they are waiting to be filled and as they are being filled -For boxes and bins of tomatoes -For snacks and a meal -For a washing up station
Seating	It's nice to be able to sit around a bucket and core your tomatoes together (particularly if you are processing a lot of tomatoes). Also useful for a sit-down meal and tired legs.
A timer and/or a time keeper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -For timing the water bath (Note: It's a good idea to get everyone to take their fresh passata home to water bath themselves) -For keeping time throughout the day so if people have a deadline to go pickup the kids they don't miss it!
Cook top	For cooking and water bathing.
Aprons, first aid kit, rubber gloves hand soap, detergent, Fowlers Vacola(s) - if available/desired.	All other considerations if you're putting on a big or small day.
Scrubbing brushes/cleaning gear, toilet paper, extension leads, jam thermometer, snacks, water, kids activities, food for a meal (Cheese? Basil? Pasta? Vino?)	



CROWD SAUCING

How to get your sauce tasting as good as it can



1. Start with really ripe tomatoes You can ripen tomatoes by :
 - Leaving them out of the fridge.
 - Keep them in the box. This will trap the ethylene gas they produce and hastens ripening.
 - Putting them with apples and/or banana which also emit a large amount of ethylene.
 - Keeping them warm.
 - Tomatoes need warmth, not light, to ripen.

2. When blanching the tomatoes for sauce, strain the tomatoes as much as possible. Many methods of saucing making call for blanching and straining of tomatoes. When you strain the tomatoes, they leach out water and some of their acid, leaving a sweeter sauce. Your sauce will also be more concentrated and require less cooking when it comes to it.

3. Get rid of the seeds and skins. This is optional, but recommended on some websites. Some say both of these can possibly lead to some sour flavours sneaking in. Getting rid off the seeds and skins can be a longer, manual process, or you can use a passata machine or a Mouli to help.

4. And what about salt and herbs in the sauce? It depends if you're saucing or passata making. Many experienced sauce makers advocate for sauce without any extras. It's better to preserve fresh sweet tomatoes and then add whatever you feel like when you cook. For instance if you make a *puttanesca* sauce and use anchovies and salted capers, you don't want to have a salt tomatoes sauce already. Salt isn't needed to help preserve sauce if it is processed (preserved) correctly.

5. Don't cook your sauce too long when you use it!

Photos by H. Elliot, Crowdsaucing Day 2016

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Crowdsaucing Day job roles

It's a good idea for people who attend your Crowdsaucing to have specific duties, particularly if it is a large gathering and you're processing a large amount of tomatoes. It's all a bit of fun! People can swap roles throughout the day. You could have one big production line, or little saucing break-out groups going through the saucing process individually... run your Crowdsaucing as you like!

Role	Duties
The Crowdsaucing Leaders	Preferably one with experience of making sauce. This person floats around the whole event and brings the parts together.
The Choppers	Responsible for quality control of how the tomatoes are being cut/getting the off cuts to the compost/cleaning up the area and knives.
The Cookers	Get the tomatoes to boil and oversee the cooking and draining process. They keep the time on how long the batches have been draining etc.
The Processors	The operators of the machines or pushers of tomatoes into bottles.
The Preservers	Overseers of filling the bottles and preparing them for preserving correctly (making sure they are not too full and the
The Cleaners	Overseers of cleaning, tidying, and putting away, and the setup of any extra outdoor cleaning area .
The Cooks	Those making tea and coffee, getting water, and/or making snacks/meals.
The Minders	Look after any kids at Crowdsaucing.

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