

## Recipes

### QUICK FRESH TOMATO SAUCE

Adapted from [NYT Cooking](#)

- 5 pounds tomatoes
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 garlic clove, halved
- 1 basil sprig
- 1 bay leaf

Cut tomatoes in half horizontally. Squeeze out the seeds and discard, if you wish. Press the cut side of tomato against the large holes of a box grater and grate tomato flesh into a bowl. Discard skins. You should have about 4 cups.

Put tomato pulp in a low wide saucepan over high heat. Add salt, olive oil, tomato paste, garlic, basil and bay leaf. Bring to a boil, then lower heat to a brisk simmer.

Reduce the sauce by almost half, stirring occasionally, to produce about 2 1/2 cups medium-thick sauce, 10 to 15 minutes. Taste and adjust salt. It will keep up to 5 days in the refrigerator or may be frozen.

### HOMEMADE SALSA RANCHERA

Adapted from [Hola Jalapeno](#)

- 2 pounds tomatoes, cored
- 2 serrano chiles
- ½ white onion, quartered
- 1 large clove garlic, unpeeled
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt

Heat broiler to high and arrange an oven rack at the top of the oven.

Arrange vegetables on a baking sheet and place under the broiler. Check every 2-3 minutes, turning the vegetables so they get charred on all sides and removing the ones that have blackened quicker. You want the skin of the vegetables to be blistered and black, it should take about 20 minutes total.

Remove the stems of the serrano chiles and the skin of the garlic. Transfer everything to a blender and add salt. Blend, starting on low then increasing the speed to high until very smooth.

Taste salsa with a chip. Add more salt if needed or an extra chile if you'd like it more spicy.



## CSA News

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### Farm Share Storage & Use Tips:

- Fresh Herbs (Basil & Cilantro): Stand fresh herbs upright in a container with 1 inch of water. Cover cilantro loosely with a plastic bag, and refrigerate for up to 2 weeks. Basil is sensitive to intense cold, so keep basil stems in a glass of water on the kitchen counter.
- Tomatoes:
  - Storage: Store tomatoes upside down on a plate or cutting board at room temperature. Do not refrigerate tomatoes; cold temperatures deplete their flavor and texture.
  - Freezing: Tomatoes can be frozen whole. Skin and core tomatoes, place on a cookie sheet, and freeze. When solid, place the tomatoes in a freezer bag and place the bag back in freezer. Thawed tomatoes are appropriate only for cooking sauces, salsas, or purees.
  - Canning: Home canning allows you to enjoy summer tomatoes year round! We recommend checking out [this publication](#) offered through the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service for step-by-step instructions and several yummy recipes.

## Good to the Last Drop

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My day starts with a small dollop of Elmwood honey in my cup of organic decaf coffee, freshly brewed in our old-fashioned stainless-steel percolator, with a similar amount of organic half and half. The other morning, when my spoon could not collect the desired amount from the jar, I poured the steaming hot coffee into the jar to dissolve the last little bit. Every drop is precious.

Honeybees are fascinating little creatures of which I know little about, mostly what I have learned is from the beekeepers here at the farm and my work back as the Kentucky State University research farm manager. Our bee man, Doug, is the first beekeeper on the farm to produce enough honey for us to make it available to you. He knows bees, keeping colonies across the Commonwealth. His better half is Tammy Horn Potter, State Apiarist for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, and author of [Beeconomy: What Women and Bees Can Teach Us about Local Trade and the Global Market](#). She Johnny Appleseeded pollinator habitat across coal country and is now upgrading the right-of-ways around the state. She knows bees, and I bet she and Doug talk about bees a lot. I always enjoy visiting with them when they come to tend the hives.

Bees are essential to grow certain crops like squash and melons and apples and pears . . . well, the list goes on. Bees are necessary to carry the pollen from the male squash flower to the female flowers to make fruit. Plus, the flowers are only open for one day, so bees have to be there on the ready. A few years back when transitioning beekeepers, we had beautiful zucchini plants, lots of flowers, and no zucchini. Doug came to the rescue. (Pumpkins have their own species of pollinators with a special mating ritual that pollinates the plant while fertilizing the female.) Some flowers chum in the bees with nectar, so the bees will accidentally trip a trigger that opens the flower, and then the plant self-pollinates.

The bees proceed to take pollen, and nectar, back to the hive for the good of the colony and for sustenance when times get rough, like winter. Nectar is stored in the little creature's crop, sometimes referred to as a second stomach. It proceeds to regurgitate nectar into the honey chamber of the comb upon each return to the hive. Pollen rides on their legs and is akin to their protein source while nectar is their carbs. It's the nectar that becomes honey, with some pollen mixed in. Honeybee biologists have determined it takes 252 million flowers to support a hive.

When the hive is healthy the beekeeper can skim off some honey if the bees have enough time to make more for winter. Since they are busy as bees they don't seem to mind. I have seen pollen for sale. Beekeepers can put a little door mat thing on the landing strip that rakes some of the pollen off their little legs.

When a bee comes back to the hive with a belly full of nectar it informs the others as to where forage can be found. It does this with the waggle dance. While moving in a figure 8 pattern, along one of the long axes, it does a shimmy thing. The direction it is facing tells the others which way to go—relative to the sun's position, not magnetic north-south. The aggressiveness and length of the shimmy indicates just how far, and the quality of the nectar. And don't forget, it's pitch-black dark inside a beehive.

Doug's bees like Elmwood Stock Farm as much, if not more, than we do. The wide array of seasonal flowers and the heavenly seas of red and white clover make for easy hunting. Different flowers impart different flavors and colors to the honey. Since the little fellas can, and do, go several miles foraging about, most honeys are blends. We cannot certify our honey as organic since we cannot control where the bees go, but Doug says they seem to like it here. Honey aficionados at the KY State Fair might say Elmwood honey is a full-bodied clover, with a hint of melon, and a sunflowery finish.

Additionally, there are hundreds of species of solitary and semi-social other pollinators out there as well. It takes bumble bees to pollinate tomatoes. Indoor tomato farmers buy little boxes of bumble bees and I'm not sure what goes on in those little cardboard boxes but I see the need. We seem to have plenty of native pollinators around. We see all kinds of bee-wasp-fly looking insects on flowers. We consciously culture habitat for the solitary and semi-social bees and for the many predatory insectivores that keep crop pests in check.

The other morning, I eventually poured my coffee into the jar a second time and shook it up, to be sure I got every little drop. I have heard that it takes millions of bee flights to make a one-pound jar of honey. Any insect that weighs 1/4000th of a pound can't carry much honey at any one time. Whether it's one million or five million, a lot of effort went into it.

Local honey can be an inoculant of sorts for seasonal allergies and that alone is worth some respect. To think about the tireless effort of honeybees to capture the inner beauty of the flowers we see, then package up such sweetness for our further enjoyment, is truly remarkable. Every drop is precious. —Mac