

barbecue sauce

RECIPE COURTESY OF ELIZABETH POETT

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 ½ cups chopped yellow onion (1 to 2 large onions)
- 2 cups chopped red bell peppers (3 to 4 peppers)
- 2 cups chopped pasilla peppers (3 to 4 peppers)
- ½ cup chopped celery (about 2 stalks)
- 8 garlic cloves
- Kosher salt
- 12 cups chopped Roma tomatoes (about 20 large Romas)
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 4 cups packed dark brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 teaspoons whole mustard seeds
- 2 teaspoons crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon whole cloves
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- 1 cinnamon stick, crushed
- 1 pod star anise

ACTIVE TIME:

1 hour

TOTAL TIME:

26 hours 30 minutes

EASE OF PREPARATION:

Intermediate

YIELD:

Six 8-ounce canning jars

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:

Canning pot and rack, six 8-ounce canning jars with bands and new lids, muslin bag or cheesecloth, jar lifter, canning funnel, lid wands

We are always barbecuing at the ranch, whether it is to feed a crew of helpers or to celebrate a birthday. The sweet, tangy flavor of this particular sauce makes it an incredibly versatile one that is a great addition to the pantry. You can taste the sweet onions, peppers, and tomatoes simmered together with a mix of spices. It is good on beef and chicken, and doubles as a dipping sauce for sausage and sweet potato fries.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prepare the jars: Wash six 8-ounce canning jars with bands and new lids in hot, soapy water, then rinse well. Place the rack in the canning pot and begin filling the pot with warm tap water; while doing so, fill each of the jars with water and place them in the pot. Add enough water to the pot so the jars are covered by 2 inches. Add the bands and lids to help ensure a good seal. Cover the pot and bring the water to a boil, then turn off the heat. Keep the pot covered until ready to fill the jars.
2. Prepare the barbecue sauce: Add the olive oil to a large, heavy duty cooking pot and heat over medium-high heat. Add the onion, both peppers, celery, and garlic. Add 1 tablespoon of salt and saute, stirring frequently, until golden brown, 4 to 6 minutes. Turn off the heat.
3. Add the tomatoes to the pot. Pour the vinegar over the top of the vegetables, mix to combine, and cover with the lid. Bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Add the brown sugar and Worcestershire sauce, mixing with a wooden spoon until the sugar has dissolved. Continue to simmer, uncovered.
5. While the sauce is simmering, put together a spice bag. Fill a muslin bag or a couple of layers of cheesecloth with the mustard seeds, red pepper flakes, cloves, fennel seeds, peppercorns, cinnamon stick, and star anise. Tie the bag shut and add to the sauce. Simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally, for 1 hour to allow the spice bag to infuse the sauce.
6. Pull out the spice bag. Allow the sauce to cool slightly, then puree to a smooth consistency using an immersion blender. Alternatively, puree the sauce in batches using a food processor or a regular blender, then return to the pot. Cook the sauce over medium-low heat to reduce and thicken, about 15 minutes.
7. Fill the jars: It is important to handle the jars carefully and to work with one at a time, keeping the pot covered. Both the jar and the product should be hot. Lay a clean kitchen cloth down on the flat surface where you will be packing the jars. Use a jar lifter to pull the first jar. Pour out the water into the pot and insert a canning funnel into the jar mouth. Ladle the sauce into the jar, leaving 1/4 inch of headspace. Run a wooden skewer around the inside of the jar to remove air bubbles. Wipe the rim of the jar with a clean, wet cloth to ensure that nothing will interfere with the seal. Using a lid wand, lift a hot lid and band out of the water bath. Place the lid on the jar. Screw the band over the lid and tighten it until you meet with some resistance. Do not overtighten. Lift the full, closed jar back onto the rack inside the canning pot. Repeat to fill the remaining jars, lids, and bands.

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8. Process the jars: Cover the canning pot and bring the water to a boil, then set a timer and process the jars for 20 minutes. Turn off the heat. Carefully remove the pot lid, tilting it away from yourself to avoid the steam. Use the jar lifter to remove the jars to a cooling rack or a flat surface lined with a kitchen cloth, leaving a little space between the jars.

9. Let sit undisturbed for 24 hours. You'll know the lids are properly sealed by the popping noise they make; this may happen right away or much later. Also, the dimple on the top of the lid should be flat and the lid concave. Write the date on the jar lid and keep in a cool, dark place for up to 1 year. Any jars that are not sealed should be refrigerated and used within 1 month.

DISCLAIMER: SAFETY NOTES

When blending hot liquid, first let it cool for five minutes or so, then transfer it to a blender, filling only halfway. Put the lid on, leaving one corner open. Cover the lid with a kitchen towel to catch splatters, and pulse until smooth.

Properly handled sterilized equipment will keep canned foods in good condition for 1 year. Making sure hands, equipment, and surfaces in your canning area are clean is the first step in canning.

TIPS: *Jars should be made from glass and free of any chips or cracks. Preserving or canning jars are topped with glass, plastic, or metal lids that have a rubber-like seal. Two-piece metal lids are most common.*

TO PREPARE JARS BEFORE FILLING: *Wash jars with hot, soapy water, rinse them well, and arrange them open-side up, without touching, on a tray. To sterilize jars, boil them in a large saucepan, covered with water, for 10 minutes. Jars have to be sterilized only if the food to be preserved will be processed for less than 10 minutes in a boiling-water bath or pressure canner. To sterilize jars, boil them in a large saucepan, covered with water, for 10 minutes. Follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and preparing lids and bands. Use tongs or jar lifters to remove hot, sterilized jars from the boiling water. Be sure the tongs are sterilized too: Dip the tong ends in boiling water for a few minutes before using them. All items used in the process of making jams, jellies, preserves, and pickles must be clean, including any towels and especially your hands. After the jars are prepared, you can preserve the food. It is important to follow any canning and processing instructions included in the recipe and refer to USDA guidelines about the sterilization of canned products. Find information on canning at the National Center for Home Food Preservation website: <http://nchfp.uga.edu>*