

Jessica Harlan

Homemade Condiments

100 Artisan Recipes Using Fresh,
Natural Ingredients



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Ulysses Press

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to Kevyn Lloyd Aiken

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Introduction



“Condiments are like old friends — highly thought of, but often taken for granted,” once quipped Marilyn Kaytor, one of America’s first true food journalists.

Stop for a moment and think about a world without condiments: would a hot dog be as delicious without its blanket of ketchup, mustard, and relish? How sad would a salad be without a drizzle of dressing? Bread would be dry and dull without a slathering of jam, and even the most delicious ice cream is all the better when it’s topped with hot fudge or caramel sauce.

If you’ve picked up this book, chances are you have a refrigerator door full of bottles of mustard, mayonnaise, pickles, and other condiments, and you’re wondering if there are better options than the mass-produced, commercial brands on the supermarket shelves.

Indeed, there are. On the pages of this book you’ll find true alchemy: how to break down a basket of ripe tomatoes from your garden into a jar of ruby-red ketchup. How to whip up the perfect salad dressing to complement tonight’s dinner, all with ingredients you already have in your pantry. How to custom-blend a hot sauce so that it’s just spicy enough for your palate.

Stick with me, and you might never have to buy another bottle of commercially prepared condiment again.

Why Make Your Own?

As you'll learn on the following pages, making your own condiments is easy and fun. And there are many advantages to making condiments yourself instead of purchasing them.

You'll know exactly what goes into each batch. Many commercial condiments like ketchup, dressing and hot sauces contain high fructose corn syrup, artificial flavorings, preservatives, MSG, and other undesirable ingredients. And who knows what the generic term "natural flavorings," so often included in the list of ingredients, means?

You can use fresh, locally grown and natural or organic ingredients. Many of the recipes in this book can be made with herbs, fruits, and vegetables grown in your own backyard or bought at a farmer's market or natural food store. Not only are homemade condiments a great way to make use of seasonal bounty, but they'll be fresher and, in many cases, healthier than store-bought versions.

You can customize your condiments according to your palate and your needs. Make a sauce spicier or milder, reduce the amount of oil or salt in a salad dressing to be a little healthier, or alter a tartar sauce recipe to complement the type of fish you're cooking.

It's fun! There is no small satisfaction in taking fresh produce and seeing the magic unfold as it transforms into a flavorful condiment. It's particularly exciting for small children to learn exactly where their food comes from. My children loved watching pounds and pounds of fresh tomatoes morph into a jar of ketchup.

Homemade condiments make wonderful gifts. Use one of the recipes in this book to create your own condiments, package them in gorgeous jars or bottles, create fun custom labels, and give them as gifts. They make fantastic stocking stuffers, hostess gifts, or even party or wedding favors.

Condiments: A Brief History

I like to imagine a cave man biting into his woolly mammoth steak and imagining that a little dash of spice might jazz it up. And indeed early condiments like salt, pepper, and herbs, were likely used as a way to add interest to bland, monotonous foods at a time when there was little variety in what humans ate.

According to *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*, condiments have been in use in America since colonial times and were at first on the tables of only those who could afford them. More common were jams and jellies, mustards, salt, and pepper. Early American housewives soon learned to "put up" pickled vegetables, jams, and other produce-based canned foods for the long winter, and jars of these foods would sustain them until the spring, when they could once again grow or forage for fresh fruits and vegetables.



By the 19th century, condiments would become a matter of controversy: activists spoke out against

condiments. Dietary reformer Sylvester Graham accused them of being “highly exciting and exhausting,” while physician and temperance leader Dio Lewis encouraged his followers to shun mustard, ketchup, and other flavor enhancers, railing, “Everything which inflames one appetite is likely to arouse the other also.”

Luckily for us, Americans had already developed an appetite for condiments, and their popularity has grown ever since, particularly as ingredients and manufacturing processes became less expensive. The emergence of fast food in the middle of the 20th century helped spur the popularity of ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise, and the accessibility of different cultures, through travel, the media, and immigrant populations increased the presence of international ingredients and condiments available to us in American supermarkets and restaurants.

Setting Up Your Pantry

Keeping a number of staples on hand, and having access to fresh, good-quality produce, will ensure that you will always be ready to make your own condiments.

The Staples

Vinegars: Many of the condiments in this book require the use of different varieties of vinegar. Not only does vinegar add a flavorful acidic note to a condiment, but it also acts as a natural preservative. The acetic acid in vinegar (commercially available vinegars contain between 4 and 7 percent acidity) can inhibit the growth of many microbes, molds, and bacteria (which is why vinegar can double as a homegrown cleaning solution). Vinegar can be made from any fruit or anything containing sugar (typically fruits or grains), but there are certain kinds of vinegar that are most frequently used in this book. White vinegar is the least expensive and most common vinegar, and it’s one of the purest forms of acetic acid; it’s derived from pure alcohol and has a very straightforward, simple flavor. Cider vinegar, which is yeast-fermented apple juice, has a fruity, sweet-tart flavor that works nicely in certain ketchup and mustard recipes, and in hot sauces. Wine vinegar is made from a twofold fermentation of grape juice and can be found in either white or red varieties. Sherry vinegar, champagne vinegar, and balsamic vinegar are all varieties of wine vinegar. These types of vinegars are particularly nice in salad dressings. Other vinegar varieties include malt vinegar (derived from malt, or sprouted grain) and rice vinegar (made from sugar derived from rice). A traditional Asian ingredient, rice vinegar has a very mild, almost floral flavor. Be sure to buy plain rice vinegar and not the seasoned kind, which contains sugar. Because of its acidity, vinegar will last indefinitely and doesn’t need refrigeration.

Dried Herbs and Spices: Many of the recipes in this book are seasoned with spices or dried herbs, which can, say, add complexity to a ketchup, give a new personality to mayonnaise, or add interest to a salad dressing. My favorite source for dried herbs and spices is a popular local natural food store that sells them in bulk. Because it’s such a busy store, I know that the bulk spice section gets replenished regularly, and I like that I can buy as much (or as little) as I wish. It’s an economical way to shop for herbs, and you can buy just what you need so that the remainder doesn’t languish in your pantry. Dried herbs and spices will begin to lose their potency after 6 months or so and, although using them past their prime isn’t likely to make you sick, they won’t contribute much flavor to your recipe. A good way to tell if your herbs and spices are still fresh is to give them a sniff — if they’re still pungent, chances are they have flavor left in them. You can also order in bulk online (try bulkfoods.com).

Fruits and Vegetables: Originally, the term “condiment” referred to pickled or preserved foods, according to *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*. Indeed, creating condiments is a wonderful way to use and preserve fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs from your own garden, purchased at a farmer’s market, or simply from the produce department in your supermarket. In some instances, the nice thing about these condiment recipes is that the produce doesn’t have to be flawless. You can use bruised fruit to make jams, and the tomatoes in ketchup recipes simmer down so much that you can even use ones that are beginning to get a little mushy. If you plan on making large batches of condiments, see if your city has a large commercial produce market that’s open to the public. Usually these markets, where smaller restaurants and grocers shop, have super fresh produce at very reasonable prices.

Canned vs. Frozen: For some of the recipes in this book, you can use canned or frozen versions of fruits and vegetables. For instance, canned tomatoes can be used in ketchups. I prefer to buy imported or organic brands (Muir Glen is one of my favorites) as they are less likely to have BPA, a potentially toxic chemical, in the interior coating of their cans, and they’re usually much lower in sodium than mainstream brands. When it comes to fruit for sauces and jams, frozen is a far better choice than canned. The fruit is typically picked at its peak and frozen immediately after picking, so it retains its flavor and nutrients. Plus, there’s nothing added to it in the way of salt, preservatives, or sugary syrups.

Fresh Herbs: Many of the recipes in this book rely on herbs for flavor. Choose herbs with leaves that look fresh and unwilted. You can extend the life of cut basil, parsley, and cilantro by storing them in the refrigerator with their stems in a cup of water, like flowers in a vase. Herbs can also be kept loosely wrapped in a damp paper towel, in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. Even better: Grow your own in pots on a sunny windowsill.



A Well-Equipped Kitchen

Certain kitchen tools will help you be more successful in making condiments. Here are some recommendations for outfitting your kitchen with the right tools.

Cookware: For cooked sauces like jam, ketchup, and barbecue sauce I like heavy-bottom saucepans ranging in size from 1 to 3 quarts, depending on how large a batch you’re making. Whether it’s uncoated stainless steel or nonstick is up to you. Nonstick finishes will make cleanup easier, but keep in mind that the finish can easily become scratched or chipped, so be sure not to use metal whisks or other sharp, hard utensils with the pan. Instead, use wooden spoons and silicone-coated whisks and spatulas. Whatever pans you choose, the best ones are heavy and thick and preferably made of stainless steel, which conducts and retains heat well (an aluminum or copper core is a bonus, as it helps with conductivity of the heat). For making large batches of cooked condiments and for jam, an enameled cast-iron Dutch oven — from Le Creuset, for example — is a good choice.

Food Mill: A food mill is like a strainer with a paddle on a crank. When you turn the crank, the paddle sweeps along the surface of the strainer, pushing the food against the holes and forcing it through while keeping undesirable solids out of the sauce. It's great for applesauce, ketchup, tomato sauce, coulis, and other smooth concoctions. Look for a food mill with several different discs that will create fine, medium, and coarse textures.

Whisks: I like having both large and small whisks on hand. A small whisk is a good size for small batches of sauces or for making salad dressing, while a larger whisk is helpful for stirring a pan full of ingredients. With a nonstick pan, be sure to use a silicone-coated whisk so it won't scratch the finish.

Mixing Bowls: A set of mixing bowls in a wide variety of sizes is great for prepping and combining ingredients. My two favorite materials are metal and glass. Metal bowls are lightweight, super durable, and heat resistant, although they will move around on the countertop if you're whisking vigorously (try anchoring them on a damp towel twisted into a ring shape). Tempered glass bowls have a nice heft to them and are heatproof and nonreactive. A metal or glass bowl can stand in for a double boiler insert by fitting it inside a saucepan containing an inch or two of water (the bottom of the bowl should not make contact with the water).

Measuring Utensils: You'll get the best results by precisely measuring all the ingredients, at least until you become more familiar with the recipes and want to play around with increasing or decreasing seasonings, sweeteners, and other ingredients. I love stainless steel dry-ingredient measuring cups because they're durable and sit sturdily on the counter as you're spooning ingredients into them. And there are double-ended measuring spoons, ideal when you need the same quantity of two different spices and don't want to have to rinse and dry your spoon between each scoop, or for when you're measuring the same quantity in both liquid and dry ingredients (Progressive International makes a great set with magnets imbedded in the handles to hold the spoons nested neatly together in the drawer). Be sure you have liquid measuring utensils as well. I like a 2-cup liquid measuring cup as well as a mini measuring beaker that measures in tablespoons and ounces.

Funnel: A plastic or metal funnel is good for pouring sauces into bottles and jars. Look for one that is heat safe. Funnels with small openings are ideal for pouring liquids into bottles, while you can find special canning funnels, which have wider openings, to fill canning jars.

Food Processor or Blender: A food processor or a blender can quickly chop or puree ingredients for salsas and can also make mayonnaise and salad dressings. Of the two, a food processor is more versatile as many come with shredding and slicing disks for vegetables or cheese. You might also find a mini food processor to be handy for processing the smaller-sized batches that many of these recipes make. Mini food processors usually have a 4-cup capacity work bowl. An immersion blender can also be helpful for pureeing ingredients directly in a bowl or a pan.

Cutlery: The three most essential knives in any kitchen, but especially for the recipes in this book, are a chef's knife, a paring or utility knife, and a serrated knife. The chef's knife will be your most-used knife; its long blade can handle any task, from chopping onions to mincing a handful of herbs. The paring or utility knife, which has a shorter blade (my favorite is a utility knife with a 4-inch blade) is wonderful for small-scale jobs like coring tomatoes, cutting up avocados, hulling strawberries, mincing garlic or shallots, peeling apples, and cutting citrus. And the serrated knife can slice tomatoes, peaches, and other soft and delicate produce without bruising it. It's also useful for slicing bread. When shopping for cutlery, the brand and design is a personal decision based on what feels

good in your hand, so shop at a store where you can actually pick up the knives and mimic a cutting motion. Higher-end cutlery brands will likely have forged blades (where molten metal is poured into mold to form the blade, and then the shape and blade are hand finished), while less pricey brands have stamped blades, which are cut from a sheet of metal. On the high end, I love Shun and Wüsthof Trident knives, while Victorinox makes a more economical line of fantastic knives that are comfortable to hold and retain their sharp edge.

Cutting Boards: Choose wood, bamboo, or wood fiber-and-resin cutting boards (such as Epicurean cutting boards), none of which will dull a knife. For creating the condiments in this book, I suggest investing in two cutting boards and delegating one for fruits and other sweet ingredients, and the other for strong-flavored ingredients like onions, garlic, and chiles. After all, there's nothing worse than making a sweet fruit sauce that tastes faintly of garlic!

Tasting Spoons: As you work through the recipes in this book, you'll do a lot of sampling to check the thickness of a sauce and to adjust seasonings, or simply to admire your handiwork! While there's nothing wrong with using everyday spoons for sampling, I have a few designated tasting spoons that use specifically for tasting food as I cook. My favorite is a long-handled stainless steel bar spoon, which is long enough to reach into a deep pot. Find a tasting spoon you like and keep a few on hand, because of course you'll want to wash a spoon between tastes.

Disposable Gloves: If you've ever rubbed your eyes after you've handled spicy chile peppers, you'll understand why it's wise to have a packet of disposable food-handling gloves on hand. Available at restaurant supply stores and online, they can protect your hands while you're handling spicy ingredients. If you're finicky and don't want the lingering odor of onions or garlic on your hands, you can use the gloves to work with any pungent ingredients.

Kitchen Scale: Many of the ingredients in this book, particularly fruits and vegetables, are listed by weight to ensure more consistent recipes. A scale is indeed a handy tool to more precisely measure ingredients and to portion out the finished product into batches. I find digital scales to be more compact and easier to use than analog versions; look for one that will measure in gradations of a fraction of an ounce.



Ketchups



Savory, tomato-based sauces like ketchups and barbecue sauces are among the most prevalent and popular condiments. More than 90 percent of Americans put ketchup on their burgers when they're eating them in a restaurant, found one study. But ketchup as we know it actually has its origins in Southeast Asia as a fermented sauce made from soybeans, according to *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*. British explorers brought the sauce home from their travels, and it eventually made its way to America by way of colonists. Tomato ketchup, however, is likely an invention of Americans, and it is believed to have been used and bottled as early as the early 19th century.

Making ketchup from scratch is surprisingly easy, if time consuming (although most of the time is largely hands-off). You'll be rewarded for your efforts by a fresh-tasting, thick condiment that is every bit as versatile as the bottled stuff — and better for you, since you're guaranteed that it's free of high fructose corn syrup and preservatives.

Fresh Tomato Ketchup

If you have a surplus of tomatoes from your garden, making homemade ketchup is a wonderful way to capture and preserve their bright, summery flavor. It's a project that takes most of the afternoon, but you'll be rewarded with a ketchup that's far more vibrantly flavored than store-bought ketchup and not so syrupy-sweet. The best tomatoes to use for this are plum or paste tomatoes, but any tomato will work. Because the tomatoes reduce so much, I found that even tomatoes that aren't super flavorful still made an incredibly tasty ketchup.

Makes 12 ounces

6 pounds plum tomatoes
2/3 cup cider vinegar
2/3 cup chopped yellow onion (about 1 medium)
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon celery seeds
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and fill a large bowl with ice and cold water. While the water is heating, prepare the tomatoes by using a paring knife to cut out the cores and cut an X in the skin on the bottom of each. Working in batches if necessary, immerse the tomatoes in the boiling water for 1 minute, then immediately plunge them in the ice water for 1 minute. When the tomatoes are cool enough to handle, peel the skin — it should come right off. Quarter the tomatoes and use your fingers to scoop out and discard the seeds and pulp.

Place the tomatoes in a large saucepan and add the cider vinegar, onion, brown sugar, and celery seeds. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the tomato mixture is reduced to about one quarter of its original volume, about 2 to 2-1/2 hours. Remove from the heat, and let cool for 10 to 15 minutes.

Place a food mill fitted with a medium disc over a large bowl and pass the tomato mixture through the mill. Discard the solids that don't pass through the sieve. Transfer the tomato liquid into a clean saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the cinnamon, allspice, cloves, and salt. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, then reduce the heat to low and let simmer, uncovered and stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes to 1 hour, until reduced by half and very thick and dark red. Let cool, then spoon into sterilized glass jars. The ketchup will keep in the refrigerator for up to 4 weeks.

Use It For

- Topping for hot dogs and hamburgers.
- Adding to meatloaf mixture, or brushing on top as a glaze before cooking.
- Stirring together with mayonnaise to make a special sauce for burgers.
- Dipping sauce for french fries or onion rings.
- Stirring into cottage cheese.



Classic Ketchup from Canned Tomatoes

When fresh tomatoes are out of season, canned tomatoes are great for making ketchup. The end result will have a richer tomato flavor and possibly a darker color, since canned tomatoes are a little more concentrated than fresh, and it might take less time to cook than if you were to use fresh tomatoes. I prefer canned whole tomatoes, either organic brands or ones imported from Italy.

Makes about 15 ounces

- 2 (28-ounce) cans whole peeled tomatoes
- 1/2 cup chopped yellow onion (about 1 small)
- 1/4 cup cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon celery seeds
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

In a large saucepan, combine the tomatoes, onion, vinegar, brown sugar, and celery seeds. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low and let simmer, uncovered, about 2 hours, stirring occasionally and using a spoon to break up the tomato pieces, until the mixture has reduced by roughly half and the tomato pieces are falling apart. Remove from the heat and let cool for 10 to 15 minutes.

Place a food mill fitted with a medium disc over a large bowl. Pass the tomato mixture through the food mill, discarding solids that don't fit through the sieve. Return the tomato liquid in the bowl to a clean saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the allspice, cinnamon, cloves, and salt. Bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat to low to maintain the simmer. Simmer, uncovered and stirring occasionally, for about 1 hour, or until thickened and reduced. Let cool, then spoon into sterilized glass jars. The ketchup will keep in the refrigerator for up to 4 weeks.

Use It For

- In place of tomato paste in pasta or pizza sauce.
- Topping for hot dogs and hamburgers.
- Base for barbecue sauce.
- Stir into Asian noodle dishes with a sweet-and-sour flavor profile, such as pad Thai.
- Mix with horseradish and lemon juice for cocktail sauce.

Spicy Chipotle Ketchup

Canned or dried chipotle chiles (smoked jalapeños) give this ketchup its lively kick. To tone it down, use just one chipotle. When using dried chiles, reconstitute them in 1/2 cup boiling water for 10 to 15 minutes. If you prefer fresh tomatoes, you'll need 4 pounds and you'll have to core, peel, and seed them (see [page 11](#)). They might need to cook a bit longer than canned tomatoes.

Makes about 15 ounces

- 2 (28-ounce) cans whole peeled tomatoes
- 1/2 cup chopped yellow onion (about 1 small)
- 1/4 cup white vinegar
- 2 canned chipotle chile peppers in adobo sauce, seeds removed, roughly chopped
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon celery seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt

In a large saucepan, combine the tomatoes, onion, vinegar, chiles, brown sugar, and celery seeds. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low and let simmer, uncovered about 2 hours, stirring occasionally and using a spoon to break up the tomato pieces, until the mixture has reduced by roughly half and the tomato pieces are falling apart. Remove from the heat and let cool for 10 to 15 minutes.

Place a food mill fitted with a medium disc over a large bowl. Pass the tomato mixture through the mill, discarding any solids that are caught. Return the pureed mixture to a clean saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the cumin, cinnamon, and salt. Bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat to low to maintain the simmer. Simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, for about 1 hour, or until thickened and reduced by half. The ketchup will keep in the refrigerator for up to 4 weeks.

Use It For

- Make a Southwestern-style meatloaf.
- Turkey burger topping along with sliced avocado and sprouts.
- Stir a spoonful into a Bloody Mary for depth of flavor and spice.
- Spread on chicken before baking.
- Stir into ground beef for spicy sloppy joes.

Tomato–Roasted Red Pepper Ketchup

Roasted red peppers add a depth and richness to ketchup. In this recipe, the peppers are roasted in the oven's broiler, but you could roast them on a gas or charcoal grill, or over a gas burner. You'll get the best results if you look for peppers that are round and uniform in size rather than ones that are oddly shaped.

Makes 6 to 8 ounces

- 1 pound red bell peppers (about 3 medium)
- 2 pounds plum tomatoes
- 1/3 cup white vinegar or cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon celery seeds
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Preheat the broiler. Place the peppers on a baking sheet and set on an oven rack positioned so the peppers are about 4 to 6 inches from the broiler. Turn the peppers with tongs so that all sides are evenly blackened and blistered, about 15 to 20 minutes. Place immediately in a heatproof bowl and cover tightly with plastic wrap. Let sit for 15 minutes, until cooled. Use your fingers to peel and rub the skin off. Remove the stems, seeds, and membranes. Roughly chop the peppers.

While the peppers are broiling and cooling, bring a large pot of water to a boil and fill a large bowl with ice and cold water. While the water is heating, prepare the tomatoes by using a paring knife to cut out the cores and cut an X in the skin on the bottom of each. Working in batches if necessary, immerse the tomatoes in the boiling water for 1 minute, then immediately plunge them into the ice water for 1 minute. When the tomatoes are cool enough to handle, peel the skin — it should come right off. Quarter the tomatoes and use your fingers to scoop out the seeds and pulp.

Place the tomatoes and roasted peppers in a large saucepan and add the vinegar, brown sugar, and celery seeds. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally and breaking the chunks apart with a spoon, until the mixture has reduced to one quarter or one third of its original volume, about 2 hours. Remove from the heat, and let cool for 10 to 15 minutes.

Place a food mill fitted with a medium disc over a large bowl and pass the tomato mixture through the mill. Discard the solids that don't pass through the sieve. Transfer the mixture to a clean saucepan over medium heat. Add the cinnamon, cloves, and salt. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, then reduce the heat to low and let simmer, uncovered and stirring occasionally, for 1 hour or more, until the sauce is very thick and dark red. Let cool, then spoon into sterilized glass jars. The ketchup will keep in the refrigerator for up to 4 weeks.

Use It For

- Brush on meatloaf before cooking for a tangy-sweet glaze.
- Turkey burger topping, along with smoked gouda and a few leaves of romaine.
- Stir a dollop into tomato soup for added flavor.
- Mix with equal parts mayo for a sandwich spread.
- Dipping sauce for steak fries or Tater Tots.



Smoked Tomato Ketchup

This recipe uses a stovetop smoker to infuse fresh tomatoes with a deep, smoky flavor. Stovetop smokers can be found at kitchenware stores for less than \$50 and are great for smoking fish and meat right on your stove. If you don't have a smoker, you can smoke the tomatoes on your outdoor grill by adding wood chips to the grill. I like hickory chips for the most distinctive smoky flavor.

Makes 4 ounces

2 pounds plum tomatoes
1 tablespoon hickory woodchips, for smoking
1/4 cup minced shallot (about 1 medium)
1/4 cup cider vinegar
1/2 teaspoon celery seeds
2 tablespoons plus 1-1/2 teaspoons brown sugar, divided
1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and fill a large bowl with ice and cold water. While the water is heating, prepare the tomatoes by using a paring knife to cut out the cores, and cut an X in the skin on the bottom of each. Working in batches if necessary, immerse the tomatoes in the boiling water for 1 minute, then immediately plunge them into the ice water for 1 minute. When the tomatoes are cool enough to handle, peel the skin — it should come right off. Quarter the tomatoes and use your fingers to scoop out the seeds and pulp.

To smoke the tomatoes, place the hickory chips in the bottom of a stovetop smoker, then cover with the drip tray and food rack. Arrange the tomatoes in a single layer on the rack. Cover and cook over medium-low heat for about 15 minutes. Remove from the heat, and let rest about 5 minutes. Transfer the tomatoes to a saucepan and add the shallot, vinegar, celery seeds, and 2 tablespoons brown sugar. Simmer uncovered for about 2 hours, stirring occasionally and breaking up the tomatoes with a spoon until the sauce has thickened and reduced. Let cool for about 10 minutes, then pass through a food mill fitted with a medium disc and set over a bowl. Discard any solids that are caught.

Return the pureed mixture to a clean saucepan, add the cinnamon, allspice, salt, and remaining 1-1/2 teaspoons brown sugar. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, then reduce the heat to low and let simmer, uncovered and stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes to 1 hour, until reduced by half and very thick and dark red. Let cool, then spoon into sterilized glass jars. The ketchup will keep in the refrigerator for up to 4 weeks.

Use It For

- Base for barbecue sauce.
- Topping for bratwurst or Italian sausage.
- Add horseradish and use as a dipping sauce for grilled shrimp.
- Brush on pork before grilling.
- Mix with cooked ground beef for sloppy joes.



Spicy Habanero Ketchup

A habanero's tiny size is deceptive: the little lantern-shaped chiles pack a punch, which is why this recipe only calls for 1. Wear food-handling gloves while you're working with the chiles.

Makes 12 ounces

4 pounds plum tomatoes
1/4 cup cider vinegar
1/4 cup chopped yellow onion (about 1/2 small)
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 habanero chile pepper, seeds and membranes removed, roughly chopped
1 teaspoon celery seeds
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and fill a large bowl with ice and cold water. While the water is heating, prepare the tomatoes by using a paring knife to cut out the cores and cut an X in the skin on the bottom of each. Working in batches if necessary, immerse the tomatoes in the boiling water for 1 minute, then immediately plunge them into the ice water for 1 minute. When the tomatoes are cool enough to handle, use your fingers to peel the skin. Quarter the tomatoes and use your fingers to scoop out the seeds and pulp.

Place the tomatoes in a large saucepan and add the vinegar, onion, brown sugar, habanero, and celery seeds. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the tomato mixture is reduced to about one-quarter of its original volume, about 2 to 2-1/2 hours. Remove from the heat and let cool for 10 to 15 minutes.

Place a food mill fitted with a medium disc over a large bowl and pass the tomato mixture through the mill. Discard the solids that don't pass through the sieve. Transfer the pureed mixture to a clean saucepan over medium heat. Add the cumin, cinnamon, allspice, and salt. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, then reduce the heat to low and let simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes to 1 hour, until reduced by half and very thick and dark red. Let cool, then spoon into sterilized glass jars. The ketchup will keep in the refrigerator for up to 4 weeks.

Use It For

- On turkey dogs along with relish and diced avocado.
- In a baked beans recipe.
- Brush on pork chops or lamb chops before grilling.

Southwestern Tomatillo Ketchup

Tomatillos look like tiny green tomatoes (except that they're covered in a papery husk), so it makes sense that they'd make one heck of a ketchup. This is one of my favorite ketchup recipes: I love how the normally very tart tomatillos mellow with the long cooking time, and the finished ketchup has a jammy, spreadable consistency.

Makes 6 to 8 ounces

2 pounds tomatillos
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup rice vinegar
2 medium cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon fresh minced cilantro
2 tablespoons lime juice
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

To prepare the tomatillos, remove the papery husks and stems, rinse off the sticky residue, and quarter them. Place the tomatillos along with the brown sugar, vinegar, and garlic in a medium saucepan. Simmer, uncovered, for about 2 hours over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally and breaking up the chunks with a spoon, until the tomatillos are mostly broken down and the mixture is very thick and reduced. Let cool for about 10 minutes, then pass through a food mill fitted with the finest disc and strain over a bowl. Discard any solids that are caught.

Return the pureed mixture to a clean saucepan, and add the cumin, cilantro, lime juice, salt, and cinnamon. Simmer, uncovered and stirring occasionally for 30 minutes, until very thick, then transfer the mixture to a sterilized jar. The ketchup will keep in the refrigerator for up to 4 weeks.

Use It For

- Spread a layer on the inside of a quesadilla.
- Dipping sauce for sweet potato fries.
- Slather on a Southwestern-style hot dog, along with green chiles, diced avocado, and pepper jack cheese.
- Spread on salmon before grilling.
- Topping for grilled shrimp tacos.

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