Roasted tomato sauce for the freezer
Makes about 4 cups

Olive oil (for the baking dishes, sheet pan)
4 pounds fresh globe, beefsteak, plum or other native tomatoes
Salt
A pinch of sugar
2 to 4 cloves garlic, or to taste
About 1/4 cup olive oil
3 to 4 sprigs of time
Torn basil leaves (optional)

1. Oil 2 baking dishes (9-by-13-inches) for round tomatoes, or 1 large rimmed baking sheet for plum tomatoes. Set the oven at 450 degrees.

2. Core the tomatoes and slice them in half crosswise. If you like, use your fingers to scrape out the seeds. (Leave the seeds in if you are going to pass the sauce through a food mill.) Place the tomatoes in the baking dishes or baking sheet, cut sides up, and sprinkle with salt. Turn the tomatoes over so the cut sides are down. Sprinkle with more salt and a few pinches of sugar.

3. Trim the root ends of the garlic cloves but leave the husks on. Place them in the baking dish or sheet. Tuck the thyme sprigs into the spaces between the tomatoes, and drizzle with 1/4 cup olive oil.

4. Roast the tomatoes for 35 to 40 minutes, or until they are soft and their skins are loose and wrinkled. If the skins are slightly charred, that’s okay; so much the better for flavor.

5. Remove the tomatoes from the oven and cool them for about 10 minutes, or until they are no longer too hot to touch. While the tomatoes are still warm, pull off the skins. Remove and discard the thyme stems.

6. Working over a plate, use your fingers to squeeze the garlic cloves to release the soft centers from the husks. Discard the husks and mash the flesh with a fork.

7. With a fork, mash the tomatoes in the baking dish. Leave them a bit chunky so the sauce has some texture. Stir in the garlic. Or, pulse the tomatoes in a food processor
until they are of a consistency you like. For a smooth sauce, pass the tomatoes through a food mill. Stir in the torn basil leaves, if you like.

8. If the tomatoes were particularly juicy and the sauce seems watery, pour it into a wide saucepan and simmer it until it thickens. Season with more salt, if you like. Spoon into containers and freeze for up to six months, or use immediately.

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