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TALKING TOMATOES

9 delicious recipes for tomatoes

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Luke Holder



Helen Graves



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Here at Great British Chefs, we're all about bringing you incredible recipes and cooking guides direct from the minds of some of the best chefs in the UK. Whether you're a dab hand in the kitchen or still learning the basics, we've got everything you need to become the cook who goes above and beyond in the name of great food and drink.

TALKING TOMATOES

Tinned tomatoes are a staple in store cupboards across the UK, and they form a vital part of many of our favourite dishes – particularly Italian classics. We've collected some of our favourite recipes, both traditional and contemporary, that showcase just how versatile and delicious tinned tomatoes can be. With just a few extra ingredients, you can create sauces that burst with flavour and transform a dish from good to great.

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Pulled lamb, preserved lemon, aubergine and tomato hotpot

by Emily Watkins

Emily Watkins' lamb hotpot is comfort food at its very best. Using tinned plum tomatoes, preserved lemon and aubergine, Emily creates a rich, satisfying base for her pulled lamb shoulder, and tops things off with crispy, buttery potato slices. Perfect if you need something easy to feed the family at the weekend.

🍴 Main 📊 Easy 👤 4-6 ⌚ 4 hour 30 minutes

Ingredients

½ lamb shoulder, bone in
1l chicken stock
5 medium potatoes, peeled
100g of unsalted butter
1 large aubergine
2 red onions
2 garlic cloves
1 preserved lemon, finely chopped
3 sprigs of rosemary, picked and finely chopped
1 tsp paprika
200ml of white wine
800g of Cirio tinned plum tomatoes, (2 cans)
flaky sea salt
black pepper

1. Preheat an oven to 150°C/gas mark 2
2. Place a heavy-bottomed frying pan over a medium-high heat. Season the lamb all over, then place in the pan and caramelise on all sides. Meanwhile, bring the chicken stock to the boil in a separate pan
3. When the lamb is nicely browned all over, transfer it to a large oven dish and pour the stock in over the top. Roast in the oven for 3 hours until the meat is falling off the bone, then remove from the oven and turn the heat up to 180°C/gas mark 4
4. Meanwhile, prepare the base and the potatoes. Place the potatoes into a saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil and simmer until the potatoes are just tender, then drain the potatoes and leave to cool
5. Cut the potatoes into 3mm slices. Melt the butter gently in another saucepan, then pour over the potatoes and stir gently to coat the slices in melted butter
6. Cut the aubergine into wedges and fry on all sides in a dash of oil in a hot pan. When the aubergine slices are nicely caramelised, remove from the heat and reserve for later

7. Finely slice the red onions and garlic and sweat in a large saucepan with a splash of oil over a medium heat. Stir in the preserved lemon, rosemary and paprika and cook for another minute. Add the white wine and reduce by two-thirds, then add the tinned plum tomatoes and the leftover stock from the lamb. Reduce the sauce until it's a nice thick consistency – you don't want it to be too wet
8. Once the lamb is cool enough to handle, remove the bone and roughly shred into chunks. Add the meat to the tomato base and check for seasoning
9. Pour the tomato and lamb into an ovenproof dish along with the aubergine wedges. Arrange the potato slices neatly over the top of the hotpot and season with salt and pepper
10. Bake the hotpot for 1 hour, turning the dish around after half an hour to get a nice even colour on the potatoes





Tomato soup with pesto and mozzarella toast

by Louise Robinson

This simple tomato soup recipe is elevated by the inclusion of vincotto, a reduced wine syrup made in the Italian region of Emilia-Romagna. Topped with a pesto and crunchy mozzarella crouton, it's a perfect dish to serve for lunch and is ready in half an hour.

🍴 Main 📶 Easy 👤 4 ⏰ 30 minutes

Tomato soup

1 tbsp of extra virgin olive oil
3 garlic cloves, crushed
800g of Cirio tinned chopped tomatoes, (2 tins)
70ml of vincotto
750ml of boiling water
sea salt
freshly ground black pepper

Pesto

50g of pine nuts, toasted and cooled
75g of basil, leaves only
50g of Parmesan, grated
2 garlic cloves, crushed
150ml of extra virgin olive oil

Mozzarella toast

4 slices of baguette
4 slices of buffalo mozzarella

1. Place a medium saucepan over a low heat and add the oil. Add the garlic and cook for a minute or so until slightly golden
2. Add the tomatoes and vincotto and increase the heat to medium. Cook until the tomatoes start to simmer (around 3 minutes) then add the water and a pinch of salt and freshly ground pepper
3. Simmer briskly for 15-20 minutes or until the liquid has reduced slightly. Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly before blending until smooth with a hand blender
4. While the soup is cooking, make the pesto by placing all the ingredients in a food processor and pulse together until blended, but with some texture. Season with sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
5. Preheat a grill to medium and lightly toast the slices of baguette on one side. Flip over and add the mozzarella slices. Cook for a couple of minutes or until the cheese is golden
6. Meanwhile, place the pan of soup back over a medium heat to warm though
7. To serve, divide the hot soup between four bowls, top with the mozzarella toasts and drizzle with pesto

Barbecued pizza with passata, anchovies and goat's cheese

by Emily Watkins

This simple pizza recipe from Emily Watkins is quickly proved so you can go from kneading to eating in less than a few hours. Topped with tangy goat's cheese, salty anchovies, fragrant rosemary and a luscious tomato sauce, it's a guaranteed crowdpleaser. Cook it on the barbecue for an extra-crisp finish, or use the oven if the weather isn't playing ball.

🍴 Main 📊 Medium 👤 Makes 1 large pizza ⌚ 1 hour 30 minutes

Ingredients

300g of strong white flour,
ideally organic
170ml of water
1/2 tsp dried yeast
1 tsp salt, plus extra for
seasoning
1 tbsp of olive oil
150g of Cirio Rustica sieved
tomatoes
8 fresh anchovies, in olive oil
125g of fresh goat's cheese
100g of black olives, pitted,
ideally marinated in herbs
and oil
1 sprig of rosemary
freshly ground black pepper

1. First, make the pizza dough. Place the flour in a bowl and add the yeast. Mix together, then make a well in the centre. Pour in the water and olive oil and lastly season with the salt. Mix with a spatula until it becomes thick and sturdy, then use your hands to knead the dough. Continue to knead until it becomes elastic and does not stick to your hands (you can also use an electric mixer with a dough hook attached to do this, which will be faster). Leave to rest for an hour, until it has almost doubled in size
2. You can cook the pizza either on the barbecue or in the oven. Light a barbecue or preheat an oven to its highest setting
3. Place the tomatoes in a bowl and season with salt and black pepper
4. Once the dough has proved, use the heel of your hand to shape it out into a large disc (or use a rolling pin). You want it as thin as possible for a crispy based, so continue stretching it out until it is ideally 2mm thick (it may have to be a bit thicker if you're cooking it in the oven or on a small barbecue to make the base fit). Place on a piece of baking parchment, then spread the tomatoes over the pizza
5. Tear the anchovies and goat's cheese into pieces and arrange evenly across the pizza. Finely chopped the rosemary and scatter over the top, then add the olives

6. To cook the pizza on the barbecue, wait for the flames to die down and for your barbecue to get as hot as it can. Place a pizza stone on the grill bars, close the lid and leave for 5 minutes to heat through. Carefully place the pizza on the stone, then cover and cook for 6 minutes. It's ready when the dough is crisp and the cheese has melted
7. To cook the pizza in the oven, preheat an oven tray and wait 5 minutes for it to heat through. Place the pizza directly onto the tray and cook for 8 minutes, until crisp. Serve immediately



Tomato and anchovy risotto

by Luke Holder

Luke Holder serves up a decadent tomato risotto recipe packed full of vibrant passata and rich Parmesan cheese, finished with marinated anchovies. Luke notes the importance of buying quality anchovies for this dish, it really will make all the difference to the flavour and adds a real “umami tsunami”, as he likes to call it!

🍴 Main 📶 Easy 👤 4 ⌚ 60 minutes

Tomato risotto

1 onion, very large, diced
250ml of chicken stock, or water
250g of risotto rice
190ml of white wine
500ml of Cirio passata
125g of butter, cubed
100g of Parmesan, grated
olive oil

To finish

12 anchovies, preferably Ortiz, chopped
50ml of Cabernet Sauvignon vinegar
50ml of extra virgin olive oil
12g of garlic, sliced
1/2 bunch of parsley, chopped

1. To make the risotto, add a glug of oil to a large pan over a medium heat. Add the onions and cook until softened but not coloured. Meanwhile, heat the chicken stock in a pan over a low heat
2. Add the rice to the onions and stir. Toast until the rice is extremely hot, then deglaze with the wine. Remove from the heat and allow to sit for 5 minutes
3. Marinate the chopped anchovy fillets in the vinegar, garlic, olive oil and chopped parsley. Set aside
4. Return to the heat, add 2 ladles of stock and bring to the simmer while stirring continuously, until the stock has been absorbed. Keep cooking like this, adding one ladle of stock at a time, until it is all soaked up
5. Pour in the passata and continue cooking, adding a little more water if necessary, until it has been absorbed and the rice is cooked through. Beat in the cubed butter and grated Parmesan and remove from the heat – it should be nice and glossy
6. Serve the risotto and pour the marinated anchovies all over the top – this will have a large amount of oil over the top but it is key to the finishing off the dish, so do not skimp!





Malfatti with tomato sauce

by Great Italian Chefs

Once you've tried this malfatti recipe, you'll have a hard time cooking anything else. Though vaguely similar to gnocchi in appearance, malfatti are actually made with a mixture of ricotta, flour and blanched spinach. The result is a delicious, light and fluffy dumpling, a true Italian comfort food classic.

🍴 Main 📊 Easy 👤 3 ⌚ 45 minutes, plus overnight straining time for the ricotta

Malfatti

250g of ricotta, drained overnight in a sieve lined with muslin cloth
500g of spinach
1 egg
50g of flour
50g of semolina flour
70g of Parmesan, finely grated
1 pinch of nutmeg
salt

Simple tomato sauce

400g of tinned Datterini tomatoes
1 onion, small
2 garlic cloves
salt

1. To make the malfatti, wilt the spinach down with a splash of water and a pinch of salt. Transfer to a sieve and allow to cool
2. Once cool, squeeze out as much water as you can from the spinach, then finely chop
3. Place the ricotta in a mixing bowl with the rest of the ingredients and mix well until everything is evenly incorporated
4. Roll the mixture into neat 4cm balls using your hands
5. Cook in salted boiling water – they are ready when they rise to the surface. Once cooked, allow to drain and steam-dry a little
6. To make the tomato sauce, sweat the onion and garlic until soft with no colour, then add the tomatoes, crushing them lightly. Cook out over low-medium for 10–15 minutes until it starts to thicken. If desired, blitz in a blender until smooth
7. Serve the malfatti on a bed of the tomato sauce

Tuscan-style sausage ragù

by Luke Holder

This rich and comforting sausage ragù recipe is a feast for the senses, packed with flavour from chickpeas, chorizo, tomato, paprika and, of course, good-quality Italian sausages. Luke suggests serving the ragù with focaccia and a glass of red wine for maximum enjoyment.

🍴 Main 📶 Easy 👤 6 ⌚ 1 hour 30 minutes

Tuscan-style sausage ragù

600g of sausage, good quality and Italian
50g of red onion, diced
50g of garlic, finely sliced
120g of chorizo
1 pinch of chilli flakes
1/2 tsp smoked paprika
1 tbsp of Cirio tomato puree
200ml of white wine
1 tin of chickpeas
400g of Cirio tinned plum tomatoes
150ml of water
100ml of extra virgin olive oil, good quality
salt

To serve

70g of Parmesan, 2 years aged
1 garlic clove
1 unwaxed lemon
1/2 bunch of parsley
1 handful of basil leaves
25ml of extra virgin olive oil
black pepper

1. To begin, add the oil to a heavy-based pan (preferably a cast iron one) and place over a medium heat – it will look like an excessive amount of oil at this stage but don't worry, it will play an important part in the sauce later on
2. Once hot, add the sausages and allow to colour. Remove from the pan and set aside once golden
3. Add the onion and garlic and season with a little salt – this will help to sweat the vegetables, rather than colour them. Gently cook for 7–10 minutes
4. Cut the chorizo into long slices and add to the onion and garlic, along with the chilli flakes, paprika and tomato puree. Cook out for a further 7–10 minutes – at this point, the oil should be a bright red colour
5. Add the wine, bring to a rapid boil and allow to reduce by half. Add the tinned tomatoes, tinned chickpeas (including the liquid in the tin) and water. Return the sausages to the pan and reduce the liquid by half
6. At this stage, the sauce should be thick and glossy from the olive oil. Set aside to rest for 5 minutes
7. Meanwhile, freshly grate the Parmesan, lemon zest and garlic clove together. Chop the parsley and pick the basil leaves

8. Add the parsley to the ragù and stir. Squeeze in half of the lemon (without the zest) and place the ragù in the centre of the table. Splash over a final touch of olive oil and sprinkle liberally with the garlic, lemon and Parmesan mixture. Grind over a twist of black pepper and eat with fresh focaccia and red wine. Sit back and enjoy the life you have for five peaceful minutes! – stunning





Sicilian-style pizza

by Helen Graves

This gorgeous Sicilian-style pizza by Helen Graves is simple to make and full of flavour. A passata-based sauce covers a creamy base of mozzarella, with slices of salami and chilli added on top before baking. You can adapt the toppings as much as you want, but a good tomato sauce is fundamental to this pizza.

🍴 Main 📊 Medium 👤 8 ⌚ 1 hour 15 minutes, plus 3 hours proving time for the dough

Sicilian pizza dough

600g of strong bread flour
17g of salt
7g of fast-action dried yeast
85ml of olive oil
390ml of warm water, hot but cool enough that you can comfortably dip your hand in it

Tomato sauce

1kg Cirio passata
1 tbsp of olive oil
8 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tsp chilli flakes, or to taste

Toppings

250g of mozzarella cheese, grated
12 slices of Milano salami
2 red chillies, finely sliced
pecorino, for grating
basil leaves

1. Make the dough by combining the flour, salt, yeast, 25ml of the olive oil and the water in a food processor and blitz until it forms into a ball of dough. Continue to run the motor for another 30 seconds or so (this is the equivalent of kneading)
2. Divide the remaining 60ml olive oil between the two trays and spread it around evenly. Divide the dough into two and place on the trays, coating in the oil. Gently spread out to a roughly rectangular shape (it will not reach anywhere near the edges) and cover lightly with cling film. Allow to rise at room temperature for 3 hours
3. Make the tomato sauce by heating the oil and gently softening the garlic for a minute or so. Add the chilli flakes and stir for 30 seconds or so then add the passata. Season with salt and pepper and simmer for 20 minutes on a low heat, with the lid on
4. Preheat the oven to 280°C, or as high as it will go
5. Gently stretch the dough to fill the trays. Divide the mozzarella between the two pizzas, then do the same with the tomato sauce, gently spreading it out. You won't need all the sauce (any leftovers are great on pasta). Top with the chillies and salami and bake for 12–15 minutes until bubbling on top and crisp on the bottom
6. Garnish with freshly grated Pecorino and basil and serve

Lamb, fennel and anchovy meatballs

by Helen Graves

Helen Graves serves up an inventive lamb and anchovy meatball recipe, served in a rich tomato sauce that offers a great counterpart to the deeply savoury meatballs. Serve with spaghetti or stuffed into flatbread for a fun delicious meal.

🍴 Main 📊 Easy 👤 4 ⌚ 45 minutes

Tomato sauce

1 onion, finely chopped
1 tsp chilli flakes
2 tbsp of olive oil
800g of Cirio tinned chopped tomatoes
125ml of white wine
250ml of chicken stock
2 bay leaves, torn
1 tbsp of Cirio tomato puree

Meatballs

400g of lamb mince
1 slice of white bread, crusts removed
3 tbsp of milk
5 garlic cloves, crushed
8 anchovy fillets, finely chopped
1 tbsp of fennel seeds, toasted in a dry pan
1 lemon, zested

To serve

parsley, chopped
spaghetti, or flatbreads

1. Make the sauce by softening the onion in the olive oil until soft but not coloured. Add the chilli flakes and tomato purée and cook, stirring for a minute or so
2. Add the white wine and let it bubble. Add the chicken stock, tinned tomatoes, bay leaves and some salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer and leave to cook with the lid on (leave a small gap) for 20 minutes. Check the seasoning
3. Make the meatballs by combining the bread with the milk and mashing to a paste with a fork
4. Combine this with the minced lamb, fennel seeds, garlic, anchovies and lemon zest. Check the seasoning by frying a small amount in a frying pan. You probably won't need any salt as the anchovies are salty
5. Form into 20 golf ball-sized meatballs
6. Brown the meatballs in a frying pan (but not cooked through). Add to the sauce and simmer gently for 5 minutes
7. Serve with spaghetti or flatbreads, scattered with the chopped parsley



Malloreddus (gnochetti Sardi) with sausage and fennel ragù

by Great Italian Chefs

This malloreddus recipe is served with a Campidanese sausage and fennel ragù – the perfect sauce to nestle into all the tiny ridges of this classic Sardinian gnocchetti. Malloreddus are a common sight around Sardinia, and are as pleasing on the eye as they are on the palate. Although they look like traditional gnocchi, malloreddus are made with a simple mixture of semolina, water and saffron, a kind of happy medium between gnocchi and pasta.

🍴 Main 📏 Easy 👤 2 ⌚ 60 minutes

Malloreddus (gnochetti sardi)

200g of semolina
100ml of warm water
1 pinch of powdered saffron

Sausage and fennel ragù (Campidanese sauce)

3 pork sausages, good-quality,
removed from their skins (use
Sardinian pork and fennel sausages
if you can get hold of them)
1 tsp fennel seeds
1/2 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, sliced
100ml of white wine
400g of Datterini tomatoes, tinned
1 bay leaf
olive oil
salt
black pepper

To serve

Pecorino Romano, grated

1. To make the gnocchi dough, add the saffron powder to the warm water, then beat into the semolina to form a dough
2. Knead for 5 minutes until the dough becomes springy. Wrap in cling film and leave to rest for 1 hour
3. Meanwhile, make the ragù. Sauté the onions and garlic with the fennel seeds and bay leaf in a splash of oil until soft but not coloured
4. Add the sausage meat, stir until nicely browned, then add the white wine and reduce by three quarters
5. Add the tin of tomatoes and season with salt and pepper. Cook down for around 20 minutes until the sauce has thickened. Keep warm
6. When ready to shape the malloreddus, cut off a piece off the dough and roll into a thin cylinder, around 0.7cm in diameter. Chop into pieces around 2.5cm long
7. Repeat this process with the rest of the dough
8. Using a gnocchi board, drag the dough pieces down the board with your thumb one at a time, creating ridged little curls; the perfect shape for collecting the ragù
9. Leave the shapes to dry out on a tray sprinkled with semolina flour
10. Cook in a pan of salted boiling water, they will float to the top when cooked
11. Drain the malloreddus and stir into the ragù. Divide between plates and top with plenty of grated Pecorino Romano



Meet the chefs and contributors



Luke Holder *Hartnett Holder & Co at Lime Wood*

Luke Holder, the co-head chef at Hartnett Holder & Co at Lime Wood, a five-star hotel in Hampshire, is a chef well versed in provenance. He champions local, sustainable produce, creating cuisine that is simultaneously rustic and sumptuous.



Helen Graves

Helen Graves is a freelance food and travel writer, recipe developer and editor. She writes one of London's oldest food blogs, Food Stories and is editor of Pit Magazine, an independent magazine about live fire cooking and smoking. She is also group editor at Just Opened London, a site which keeps London up to date with new restaurant and bar openings. She is based in South East London and loves carbs, cats, crabs and kebabs.



Pollyanna, Great Italian Chefs

Great Italian Chefs is a team of food lovers dedicated to bringing you the latest news, views and reviews from the gastronomic mecca that is Italy. From Veneto and Lombardy in the north to Calabria and Sicily in the south, we celebrate the very best of this glorious cuisine and try to bring you a little bit of la dolce vita wherever you are.



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