



LUTENITSA-PEPPER TOMATO SPREAD

Makes 8-10 16oz jars

EQUIPMENT:

- 8-10 (16oz) jars with jars with new metal lids
- 1 large pot (at least 7" deep)

INGREDIENTS:

- 10-11 pounds (25-30 peppers) of sweet red peppers
- 6 medium carrots, peeled and sliced in half
- 2 sticks of celery, sliced in four
- 1 cup parsley, chopped
- 18oz (1 medium + 1 small cans) tomato paste
- 1.5 tsp salt
- 3/4 cup olive oil
- 1/2 tblsp balsamic or red wine vinegar (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Wash and dry the jars.
2. Preheat your grill, if using. If you don't have a grill, you can use the oven broiler instead (for step 3).
3. Wash and dry the the peppers. Arrange on a rimmed baking sheet (work in batches if needed), leaving at least 1/2 inch space around each pepper. Place peppers under the broiler (alternatively you can use the grill) and roast until their skin blisters and turns black. Check peppers every 3-5 minutes to make sure they are not burning. Turn peppers over when a side is blistered and with dark spots. Roast until all sides of the peppers are blistered and with black spots, 25-40 min depending on your oven type and broiler settings. Remove peppers from the oven and place in a large pot or bowl and cover tightly with a lid. Repeat with the remaining peppers, if any. Let peppers cool completely, the steam in the bowl/pot will loosen their skin. The skins should peel away off of the peppers easily when cooled.
4. Place carrots and celery in a medium pot, cover them with water and bring to a boil. Lower down to a low-heat and simmer until the carrots and celery are soft, about 10-15 minutes. Drain the water and let the carrots and celery to cool down for 15 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, peel the pepper skins from the cooled roasted peppers, remove the stem and the seeds. Seeds can be easily removed if the roasted peppers are cut open and the seeds are gently scraped with a spoon or back of a knife. Do not run peppers under water to clean, you'll lose most of the roasted flavor that you worked so hard to get.
6. Place as many peppers as you can fit in your food processor (using an immersion blender works well too). Pulse a few times until peppers are pureed but still a bit chunky. Place the pureed peppers in a large mixing bowl.



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7. Add the boiled carrots, boiled celery and the tomato paste in a food processor, blender (using an immersion blender works well too) and puree until smooth. Place the puree in the large bowl with the peppers. Add the chopped parsley, olive oil, salt and balsamic vinegar. Mix everything until well incorporated. Taste and add more salt, vinegar or olive oil per your liking.
8. Take a jar, make sure it is dry, and fill it with Lutenitsa using a spoon. Make sure the jar is not filled all the way to the top, fill only to the point where the jar neck starts. Wipe clean the jar top, otherwise it might not create a solid vacuum with the lid. Close the jar with a lid and make sure the lid is tight. Repeat the process with the remaining jars until no Lutenitsa is left.
9. Working in batches if necessary, place the Lutenitsa jars in a large pot, standing and lid side up. Leave a little room between the jars, just enough so they are not touching. Make sure that the pot is deep enough; you need at least 2 inches of space above the top of the jars. Fit as many jars as you can but make sure the jars are not touching each other. Fill the pot with water so that it covers the jar lids by at least an inch. Bring the pot to a boil, lower to med-heat and simmer bubbling for 10 minutes (start timing after the water starts boiling). During the 10 minutes of canning make sure the water is bubbling but not super aggressive and splashing. Check the jars from time to time to make sure no jar is leaking.
10. After the 10 minutes of canning, pour the water from the pot carefully, it will be really hot! If some water is still left at the bottom of the pot that is ok, the most important thing is to be careful when pouring the hot water from a pot filled with jars. Let jars sit for 10 min to cool off slightly. Using a jar lifter or a thick kitchen towel, carefully remove jars from the pot and place them on a kitchen towel. Repeat the sterilizing process with the remaining jars, if any.
11. Cool the jars completely and store in a cool place. Lutenitsa can be stored for up to 1 year. Refrigerate opened Lutenitsa jars, and consume within 10 days of opening.