



Kitchen Cheat Sheet: Tomato Gravy

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Tips and Extras

- Bacon grease is the queen bee here. It adds a smoky richness you just can't fake. Butter or oil works, but they won't give you that same down-home depth.
- Cook your flour slowly in the fat until it's the color of toasted pecans—stir constantly and don't rush it. This is where your gravy earns its stripes.
- A pinch of salt and black pepper right in the roux gives it a head start on flavor. Trust me, it makes a difference.
- Fresh in the summer, canned the rest of the year—just make sure they taste good. Stewed tomatoes add sweetness, diced with green chiles bring the sass, and crushed tomatoes give you a smoother gravy.
- Tomatoes vary in acidity, so don't be afraid to add a pinch of sugar to balance things out. One spoonful at a time—this is gravy, not a bake sale.
- Not traditional, but sautéing a little onion or garlic in your fat before adding flour can give your gravy extra oomph. We love an overachiever.
- Water works in a pinch, but chicken broth, veggie broth, or even V-8 juice can elevate the whole dish. Think of it as the secret weapon behind the curtain.
- Once it all comes together, let it bubble gently for 5–10 minutes. This thickens it up, smooths out the flavors, and gives it that slow-cooked feel.
- If your gravy gets clumpy, whisk like you mean it—or run it through a sieve if you're really trying to impress someone's mama.
- Tomato gravy waits for no one. Serve it piping hot over biscuits, eggs, grits, or meatloaf—and make sure folks are seated before you ladle it out. This stuff doesn't play.

Storage

Refrigerator:

Let the gravy cool to room temperature, then spoon it into an airtight container. It'll keep in the fridge for up to 4 days—just long enough to smother a few breakfasts, lunches, and maybe a midnight biscuit or two.

Freezer:

Yes, you can freeze it! Pour cooled gravy into a freezer-safe container or zip-top bag (leave a little room for expansion), and freeze for up to 3 months. Thaw overnight in the fridge, then reheat gently on the stovetop. Add a splash of broth or water if it's gotten too thick—gravy's like us after a long nap: it needs a little warm-up.

Reheating:

Warm it up in a saucepan over low heat, stirring frequently to keep it smooth. Microwave works in a pinch, but do it in short bursts and stir often—because tomato lava is real, and your microwave will never forgive you.

Variations

- Use fresh, peeled summer tomatoes and a handful of herbs like thyme or basil. It's lighter, brighter, and perfect for showing off your backyard bounty.
- Add a handful of shredded cheddar or Parmesan to the hot gravy just before serving. It's creamy, tangy, and pairs dangerously well with grits.
- Sauté chopped onion or garlic in your fat before adding flour to give the gravy an extra layer of savory flavor. Perfect for when you're feelin' a little extra.

Faqs

Can I make tomato gravy without bacon grease?

Absolutely. While bacon grease adds that smoky, Southern flavor we all love, you can use butter, vegetable oil, or even shortening if that's what you have on hand. It'll still be delicious

What kind of tomatoes should I use?

Canned diced tomatoes work just fine, but you can also use stewed, crushed, or even fresh tomatoes if you've got a garden surplus. Rotel adds a little spice. As far as fresh tomatoes? Use what you have access to!

Why does my gravy taste too tart?

Some tomatoes are naturally more acidic. Add a pinch or two of sugar while it simmers to mellow things out without making it sweet.

Is tomato gravy the same as pasta sauce?

Not quite! While both are tomato-based, Southern tomato gravy is made with a roux and usually served over biscuits, grits, or meats—not noodles. It's thicker, creamier, and has a whole different attitude.

Serve with...

Click links to go to the recipe.

- [meatloaf](#)
- [grits](#)
- biscuits (keep it easy with [drop biscuits](#))
- [hamburger steaks](#)
- fried eggs
- grilled cheese
- [cornbread](#)