

This recipe has evolved over several years & is constantly being tweaked.

The first rule is to leave yourself plenty of time - it always takes longer than you think it will.

I use a mixture of 4:2 chilli to butternut and sieve the cooked fruit as we prefer a smooth sauce. I use no onion or garlic but that is our preference - we feel that this sauce recipe gives a true chilli flavour.

There is no reason you can't use other fruit instead of butternut, experimenting to see what you like is all part of the joy of cooking. Most fruit will be more liquid than butternut so cooking times & water amounts would need to be adjusted.

How hot the sauce is depends on the type of chilli & how much of the placental tissue you leave in. There is no heat in the seeds - it's in the white spongy tissue they are attached to. Superhots are a different beast as the inside of the fruit is also coated in hot placental tissue so will make a VERY hot sauce using this recipe.

If using very hot chillies the ratio will need to be biased more to butternut. A naga sauce I made was nearer 50:50 & was still very hot 2 years later. Superhots would need to be treated with even more caution.

Sauces need at least 6 months to mature, the very hot ones can take over a year.

Ingredients

1kg chilli/butternut puree
 200g granulated sugar - up to 340g depending on your taste
 105ml white wine vinegar
 ¼ tsp salt
 mineral water to cook with



I use mineral water because our tap water is hard & often has a chemical taste. If you have nice tap water then use that.

Method

Wash the fruit, cut off the stems & remove what placental tissue & seeds you want to. Peel & roughly chop the butternut.

Chop the fruit & butternut in a food processor if you have one, or finely with a knife.

Add some water & cook until soft. How much water will depend on how wet the mixture is. Roughly 200-300ml per kg fruit.

Leave to cool a bit, blitz again & sieve. We blitz with a nutri blender for this. Bit time consuming but it works well.

N.B. The instructions say not to do anything hot but I have found if you only half fill the container it works ok - however you do this at your own risk. Don't open the lid immediately or it will go everywhere - let it settle for a minute or so.

Sieving is easier when the mixture is warm. You'll need a good strong arm to push it through !!



You don't have to sieve but we prefer a smooth sauce. If you are happy with bits then either blitz it finer before cooking or don't sieve after the nutri blending.

Weigh the puree & calculate how much of the other ingredients you need based on the recipe above.

Heat up the puree, add the sugar, stir until dissolved, add the vinegar & salt. Bring to a rolling boil & cook until it thickens - usually about 30 mins. Stir as needed - it makes a thick sauce so will try & stick. Remember that it will be thicker when cold.

While this is cooking it's time to sterilize your jars. I do this in the oven - put clean dry jars in a cold oven & bring up to 120°C for about 10 mins. I put the lids in a bowl & pour boiling water over, leave to drain & dry with a clean cloth or kitchen roll.

Pour the sauce into the hot sterilized jars, put the lids on - making sure you clean any splashes off with a clean cloth, leave to cool & label.

Store for at least 6 months to allow the flavours to develop into a sauce rather than just a jar of individual ingredients.

Once open store in the fridge. As this recipe uses the minimum amount of sugar, vinegar & salt I can get away with, it's not one of those sauces that will keep for months once open. I now use 200ml jars for that reason. Plus it means we can have several different types open at any one time!!

