

CHILTOMATE

SAUCE OF CHARRED TOMATOES AND CHILES

Tomatoes are indigenous to Mesoamerica, and *Chiltomate* is probably one of the world's earliest cooked tomato sauces. Rustic both in preparation and in final form, this elemental sauce reveals its ancient roots. Composed of only the simplest ingredients and cooking methods – tomatoes, *chiles* and onion (members of the allium family, available to the pre-conquest Maya) that are roasted then crushed – it is quick and easy to make. Traditionally served with *Poc Chuc* and other grilled meats, *Chiltomate* can be prepared at the same time as another typical accompaniment – *Cebollas Asadas* – all cooked over the same fire that will be used for the meat.

10 SERVINGS

- **2 lbs. (1 k) Roma tomatoes**
- **1 *chile habanero***
- **6 large cloves garlic**
- **1/2 purple onion**
- **1 tsp. (5ml) salt, or to taste**
- **2 Tbs. (30ml) juice of *naranja agria***
(Also known as sour orange or Seville orange. Substitute: 2 parts fresh lime juice, 1 part each fresh orange and grapefruit juice)

✧ CHAR THE VEGETABLES ✧

STEP 1 IN A GRILLING BASKET or in a large cast iron skillet over highest heat, char the tomatoes, *chile*, garlic and onion. Remove and set aside to cool.

✧ FINISH ✧

STEP 2 IN A STONE MOLCAJETE OR LARGE MIXING BOWL with a potato masher, mash the charred *chile* and garlic until thoroughly pulped. Remove caps of tomatoes and discard. Cut tomatoes in half; squeeze out seeds and discard. Coarsely chop the tomatoes and place in the *molcajete* or mixing bowl with garlic and *chile*. Mash coarsely until there are no longer any large pieces. Transfer to a serving bowl. Finely chop the charred onion half and add to tomato mixture. Add salt and juice; stir until blended. Check seasonings.