

Caramelized Tomato-Fennel Butter

I made this recipe as a spread to put on sandwiches and for cheese boards. At a neighborhood gathering, I brought it to go with a meatball appetizer. Neighbor Natalie loved it and wanted to eat it on toast for breakfast. Hey, I bet it would be good if you put an egg on that toast. Yum.

And yes, I took this beyond just a can of tomato paste. And it takes less than 5 minutes to make.

Ingredients

1 can Tomato Paste
2 Tbsp Olive Oil + 1 Tbsp Olive Oil
1 tsp Fennel Seed
1 tsp dried Oregano
1/2 tsp Garlic Powder
1/2 tsp Onion Powder

Preparation

Heat a non-reactive skillet over medium-high heat. When the skillet is hot, add the two tablespoons of olive oil. It should glisten in the pan. Quickly add the fennel seed and oregano and move it about in the pan, so it sizzles and releases its oils but does not burn. (10 seconds). Add garlic and onion powders, and blend into the herbs. Now add the tomato paste and with a spatula flatten it into a thin layer about the skillet. It will bubble and sizzle and begin to brown up a bit. Move it about as it begins to caramelize to dark brown color on the edges and in the bottom of the skillet. Continue moving to keep it from burning. (1-2 minutes).

Remove the tomato mixture from the skillet, scraping up all the caramelization stuck to the pan. Place in a small glass mixing bowl. Add the last tablespoon of olive oil. Using an immersion blender, blend in the oil, break apart the fennel seeds and caramelized tomato bits until smooth.

Store in an airtight container for up to two weeks. Serve at room temperature.

Ways to use Tomato-Fennel Butter

- As a condiment on sandwiches - Italian submarine, or a simple cheese and salami.
- As a spread on a cheese board or charcuterie plate.
- Make an appetizer. Below is a baguette slice with the Tomato-Fennel Butter and hard cheese. I would use shaved fresh Parmesan or Pecorino-Romano, crumbled Cotija, or thin sliced Gruyère.
- On toast for a savory treat with bacon and egg on top.
- The sky is the limit, so have some fun with this delicious butter

