

Garden Fresh Tomato Soup

Makes 2 quarts

Use home-grown, grass-fed and organic ingredients whenever possible.

Ingredients:

- 2 TBSP butter
- 2 TBSP extra virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped (approx. 1 ½ cups)
- 1 medium carrot, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, seeds removed and cut in ½" pieces
- 1 ½ TBSP freshly pressed garlic
- 4 lbs garden fresh tomatoes*, i.e., Roma, cherry or grape (8-9 cups), cut in ½" pieces
(no need for precisely cut pieces)
- 2 cups chicken broth or vegetable broth
- 2 TBSP white rice, uncooked (basmati or jasmine)
- 2 TBSP sugar
- 2 TBSP sweet basil, dried or 6 TBSP fresh
- 1 TBSP Italian seasoning
- 1-2 tsp Himalayan pink salt (start with 1 tsp, taste-test after cooking)
- 1 bay leaf
- ¼ - ½ tsp mixed peppercorns, freshly ground
- Cream, used at serving time

*Substitute 2 – 28 oz cans/jars diced or crushed tomatoes or 2 quart jars of your homemade canned tomatoes

Directions:

1. In a Dutch Oven or large pot, gently heat the butter, olive oil and onions, and cook until onions are softened (but not browned), approximately 5-6 minutes.
2. Add chopped carrot, red bell pepper, fresh tomatoes, garlic and cook 3-4 minutes more.
3. If using canned tomatoes, add those now with the broth, bay leaf, salt, uncooked rice, sugar, and seasonings. Cook over medium heat, uncovered, stirring occasionally, for about 30-40 minutes, or until the rice is completely cooked and vegetables are tender. (If using canned tomatoes, cook time is reduced to 20 minutes.)
4. Remove the bay leaf and using a stick/immersion blender, puree the mixture until smooth. You can also use a blender, following blender instructions for pureeing hot foods (cover vent with a cloth and do in small batches). It is not necessary, but if you want super smooth soup without tomato seeds, you can put the mixture through a sieve/fine strainer to remove the tomato seeds, etc.
5. Adjust seasoning, if necessary.
6. To serve: Garnish with a splash of heavy cream, freshly grated Parmesan cheese, pan-toasted croutons. Nice with a grilled cheese or Rubeen sandwich, or open-faced garlic/cheese French bread. A green salad on the side completes this delicious lunch or supper!

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