

Tomato Soup

PREP: 10 MINS (plus cooking time)

YIELD: 6 Servings

3 pounds Fresh plum tomatoes, halved lengthwise

1/3 cup Olive oil

1 Tbsp. Kosher salt

1 large Yellow onion, chopped (about 2 cups)

3 cups Vegetable stock (or water)

1 cup Heavy cream

1 cup Basil leaves, thinly sliced (chiffonade)

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Toss with about half of the olive oil and the salt.
3. Arrange the tomatoes, cut side up, on a baking sheet in one layer and roast for around 20-30 minutes, until the tops look caramelized.
4. In a large stockpot, add the remaining olive oil and the onions and sauté over medium heat, covered. Stirring periodically, cook the onions for about ten minutes until translucent.
5. Remove the lid and raise the heat to medium-high and continue cooking until the onions caramelize.
6. Add the roasted tomatoes and the stock to the stockpot, bring to a boil and simmer, uncovered, for around 20-30 minutes.
7. Remove from the heat and purée* with an immersion blender, a food processor or a traditional blender until smooth.**
8. Stir in the cream and the chiffonade of basil.
9. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

*If you don't have a blender, before adding the roasted tomatoes to the large stockpot you can either finely chop the roasted tomatoes or you can put them through a food mill to coarsely puree them. Either method will make a delicious tomato soup.

**make sure the soup is not hot when blending in a blender or it can splatter out of the blender and burn you).

Note:

For a healthier creamy tomato soup without the cream, substitute out the cream for 4 slices of sandwich bread, crusts removed, torn into pieces. Add the bread to the stockpot along with the roasted tomatoes and stock and cook as instructed. Before serving, purée with an immersion blender, a food processor or a traditional blender until smooth (make sure the soup is not hot when blending in a blender or it can splatter out of the blender and burn you).

Onion Jam

PREP: 10 MINS (plus cooking time) YIELD: approximately 1 cup

1 ¼ pounds Red onion, thinly sliced (about 3 cups)
3 Tbsp. Vegetable oil (or any neutral oil like Canola or grapeseed)
2 Tbsp. Sugar
½ tsp. Kosher salt
¼ cup Balsamic vinegar
¼ Water

Instructions:

1. Add the sliced onion, salt and oil to a medium-size saucepan and heat over medium heat, covered and stirring periodically, for about 10 minutes until the onions are translucent.
2. Raise the heat to medium-high and sauté, stirring periodically, until the onions begin to brown.
3. Sprinkle the sugar and continue to cook until the onions caramelize.
4. Add the vinegar and water and reduce to a syrup.
5. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for 3-5 days.

Notes:

For a bacon-onion jam, before cooking the onions, omit the 3 Tbsp. Vegetable oil and add around 4 ounces of finely chopped bacon to the pan and cook until the fat renders and the bacon begins to brown.

Grilled Cheese

PREP: 10 MINS (plus grilling time) YIELD: 4 sandwiches

8 White bread slices (for making 4 sandwiches)

¼ cup (4 Tbsp.) Mayo or melted butter (for spreading over the bread slices before grilling)

1 cup grated (or individual slices) Cheese (combination of favorite melting cheeses, for instance: American, Sharp cheddar+American, Mozzarella+Provolone, Fontina+Gruyere)

Oil for grilling

Instructions:

1. Lightly spread mayo (or melted butter) on both sides of each bread slice.
2. Lay out four slices of the sandwich bread on a clean piece of parchment paper.
3. Lightly spread jam over top side of these four bread slices.
4. Sprinkle (or layer) equal amounts of cheese over the jam.
5. Top with the remaining four slices of sandwich bread.
6. Place on a lightly oiled griddle or in a skillet. If using a panini press, use aluminum foil to protect both sides of the sandwich from sticking.
7. Grill on both sides until the bread is golden brown and the cheese is bubbly.
8. Slice on the diagonal and serve.

Note:

To give the sandwich a bit of a garlic bread flavor, lightly sprinkle garlic salt over the interior side of each bread slice.