



End-Of-Summer Tomato Soup

SERVINGS SERVES 6 TO 8

- 2.5kg (about 5 pounds) **fresh tomatoes of any kind, cored and cut into 2-inch chunks or quarters**
- 6 tablespoons **olive oil, divided, plus more for serving**
- 1 teaspoon **sea salt, divided**
- 1/4 teaspoon **black pepper**
- 3 **yellow, white, or sweet onions, chopped**
- 1/4 teaspoon **baking soda**
- 5 **garlic cloves, minced**
- 2 **anchovy fillets optional**
- 1/2 teaspoon **MSG optional**
- 150g **stale bread, preferably from a sourdough or rustic loaf, cut into 1 inch pieces**
- 2 sprigs **fresh basil, plus 10 leaves, julienned, for serving**
- 4 tablespoons **butter, cut into 4 pieces**

1 Set an oven rack to the middle position and heat oven to 400°F. Place the tomatoes, 2 tablespoons olive oil, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and pepper in a large bowl and toss to combine. Transfer to a baking sheet in a single layer. Transfer to the oven and roast, stirring occasionally, until tomatoes begin to brown at their edges and most of the liquid has cooked off, 50 to 60 minutes.

2 Place the onions, remaining 4 tablespoons olive oil, remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt, and baking soda in a large Dutch oven and cook over medium high heat, stirring regularly, until the onions are softened and beginning to break down, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic, anchovies (if using), and MSG (if using) and cook, stirring regularly, until fragrant, 30 seconds.

3 Add the roasted tomatoes and their juices to the pot, followed by the bread, basil sprigs, and just enough water to cover the contents of the pot completely. Bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat to low and cook, stirring occasionally, until the bread pieces have fully softened, 10 to 20 minutes.

4 Remove the basil sprigs. Using a blender or an immersion blender, process the soup until completely smooth, 30 seconds to 2 minutes. (For an extra-velvety soup, pass it through a fine-mesh strainer.) Return the soup to the pot along with water as needed to produce the desired consistency. Add the butter and stir until fully incorporated. Season to taste with additional salt and pepper. Heat over medium-low heat until hot and serve, with a drizzle of olive oil and a sprinkle of basil leaves as a garnish. (And some nice bread or a grilled cheese sandwich.)

This recipe works best with summer tomatoes, but it can be made at other times of the year using two 28oz cans of plum tomatoes in their place. (Skip the roasting step and add the contents of the cans at the beginning of step 3.) The optional anchovies and MSG serve to enhance the underlying flavor of the tomatoes and should not be noticeable otherwise. The amount of water you'll need to add to the soup in steps 2 and 3 depends upon the juiciness of your tomatoes and the age of your bread.