



TOMATO SOUP

SERVES 6

Ingredients

3-4 cups vegetable stock (homemade stock recipe below or use a good bouillon)
2 tablespoons butter
1-2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 large onion, cut in ½-inch pieces
2-3 leeks, white part only, cut in ½-inch pieces
2-3 carrots, peeled and cut in ½-inch pieces
2-3 celery stalks, cut in ½-inch pieces
1 jar puréed tomatoes
2 bay leaves
fresh basil leaves, a big handful, roughly chopped
fresh parsley leaves, a big handful, roughly chopped
salt and pepper
Optional: ¼- ½ cup heavy cream

Procedure

1. In medium pot, melt butter and add 1 tablespoon olive oil. Sauté leek and onions with a pinch of salt for about five minutes, stirring frequently, until they are translucent and wilted. If they start to stick to the pot, add another tablespoon olive oil.
2. Add carrots and celery and continue sautéing for another few minutes.
3. Add pureed tomatoes, bay leaves, and another generous pinch of salt, and three cups of stock. Bring to a boil, and then reduce heat to a medium-low flame. Cook for 25-30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Add basil and parsley, and adjust salt and pepper. Turn off heat.
5. Remove bay leaves. In small batches, purée soup in blender, adding extra stock as necessary to get desired smooth consistency.
6. Return to pot and adjust seasonings. If desired, stir in heavy cream.
7. Serve hot.

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BASIC VEGETABLE STOCK

Yields 8-10 cups

Homemade vegetable stock makes all the difference in many recipes, especially soups, stews and risotto. It adds a depth of flavor you would miss if you used water, but it's a much cleaner flavor than canned stocks or bouillon cubes. Make some stock whenever you have extra vegetables in the fridge and freeze it in small containers so you always have it on hand.

Ingredients

3 carrots

3 celery stalks

3 onions

3 leeks (use tough green part)

2 bay leaves

large handful of parsley, stems only, cut in half

Optional if you have them on hand: 2 parsnips, a few sprigs of fresh thyme, a few peppercorns

8-10 cups water

Procedure

Cut all vegetables into ½-inch pieces. Place all ingredients in large pot and fill ¾ high with cold water (this will be about 8 to 10 cups). Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer for 45 minutes. Strain, discarding vegetables and reserving liquid.

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