

Roasted Tomato Soup with Salsa Verde

Serves 4:

Ingredients

Roasted Tomato Soup:

3 pounds ripe tomatoes

kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

olive oil

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 medium Spanish onion, chopped

4 garlic cloves, chopped

pinch of red pepper flakes

1 quart chicken stock, preferably homemade

3 or 4 sprigs of thyme

3 sprigs of basil

Salsa Verde:

6 garlic cloves

1/4 cup fresh basil leaves

1/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves

1/4 cup fresh parsley leaves

1 tablespoon thyme leaves

1 small seeded hot pepper, or pinch of red pepper flakes

kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons Sherry vinegar

1/2 to 3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

juice of 1/2 lime

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Halve the tomatoes lengthwise and lay them out, cut side up, on lined baking sheets.

Season them lightly with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper and drizzle with olive oil.

Roast for 45 to 50 minutes, rotating pans midway.

In a dutch oven or soup pot, melt butter and olive oil over medium heat.

Add chopped onion and sauté until translucent, about 8 minutes.

Add garlic and red pepper flakes; season lightly with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until golden.

Add roasted tomatoes and any accumulated juices to the pot.
Stir in chicken stock--preferably homemade, but low-sodium store bought will work as well.
Add a few sprigs each of thyme and basil and bring to a boil.
Turn down the heat and simmer the soup for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Remove the soup from the heat and let cool slightly.
Remove the herb sprigs from the pot.

Use an immersion blender to purée the soup until smooth (or use a blender in batches).
Bring back to a simmer to heat through.
Taste and adjust the seasoning, if needed.

Make Salsa Verde: roughly chop garlic cloves and add to the bowl of a blender or mini chopper.
Pulse until finely minced.
To the chopper, add fresh basil, cilantro, parsley and thyme leaves.
Add a small seeded hot red pepper or pinch of red pepper flakes, kosher salt and ground black pepper.

Pour in Sherry vinegar, cover, and slowly drizzle in extra virgin olive oil while pulsing to combine.
The salsa should come together as a thick puree: taste and adjust seasoning, add a hit of fresh lime juice.
Set aside until ready to serve.

Ladle soup into bowls and drizzle with Salsa Verde.
Serve alongside Grilled Cheddar & Onion Confit Sandwiches.

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Grilled Cheddar & Onion Confit Sandwiches

Serves 4:

Ingredients

Onion Confit:

3 pounds Spanish onions

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 tablespoon sugar

kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

3 garlic cloves, chopped

1/2 cup red wine

2 or 3 thyme sprigs

Grilled Cheddar & Onion Confit Sandwiches:

rustic bread, preferably sourdough, thickly sliced

extra virgin olive oil

Onion Confit

arugula leaves

1/2 pound aged English Cheddar, shaved

Preparation

Make the Onion Confit: begin by halving and thinly slicing Spanish onions.

In a large sauté pan, melt butter over medium heat.

Add sliced onions to the pan and sprinkle with sugar, kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Cook, stirring frequently, until the onions have exuded most of their juices, about 15 to 20 minutes.

Add chopped garlic to the pan and cook for 3 or 4 more minutes.

Pour in red wine and turn up the heat to medium high; stir in a couple of thyme sprigs.

Continue to cook for another 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until onions are very soft.

Taste and adjust seasoning, if needed; let cool.

Confit can keep in a sealed container in the fridge for up to 3 months.

Lightly brush the outside of the bread slices with extra virgin olive oil.

Turn slices over; slather one half with onion confit, then layer with arugula and shavings of cheddar.

Top with the other slice of bread.

Heat a large grill pan or cast iron skillet; toast each side of sandwich, weighing down with a press.

Halve sandwiches, plate and serve alongside bowls of Roasted Tomato Soup with Salsa Verde.

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